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Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, October 5, 1892.

No. 64. { COMPLETE. }

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 34 & 36 NORTH MOORE STREET, NEW YORK.  
New York, December 9, 1893.

ISSUED WEEKLY.

{ PRICE  
5 CENTS. }

Vol. III

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# FRANK READE JR.'S

## PART I.

## Electric Cyclone; OR, THRILLING ADVENTURES IN NO MAN'S LAND.

By "NONAME."



He hastily shut the current from the netting, and then opened the door in the netting. The Cyclone had been brought to a stop. Frank hastily dragged each one of the unconscious outlaws to the door and dropped them unceremoniously out upon the hard prairie.



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# Frank Reade Jr.'s Electric Cyclone;

OR,

## Thrilling Adventures in No Man's Land.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Greyhound of the Air; or, The Search for the Mountain of Gold," etc.

### PART I.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE KIDNAPPING CASE.

"Hi, dar, Marse Frank, yere am de mos' frightfulest ting I eber hear tell on in de whole course ob my life. Jes' yo' please read dat ar ting, an' I tink yo'll agree wif me, fo' suah!"

"Eh, Pomp! What is the matter now?" Frank Reade, Jr., a tall, handsome and intellectual young man, turned in his chair and accepted from the ebony-visaged servitor at his elbow a copy of a newspaper. Pomp, which was the colored gentleman's cognomen, placed his thumb upon a glaring caption at the head of one of the columns:

"Kidnapped by a Fiend!"

"A special dispatch to the Readestown Herald from Colville, Nebraska, conveys the information that the most strenuous efforts of skilled detectives have resulted in a failure to overtake or locate the kidnapper, Carlos Coleman. The whole country about is in a state of great excitement, and armed bands of men are scouring the region about, avowing their purpose of lynching Coleman as soon as he is caught."

"The fiend, however, is cunning, and has outwitted his pursuers. As near as can be learned, he has fled to No Man's Land, where he is said to be the leader of a band of outlaws."

"The correct version of the affair is now given to the world for the first time. It seems that Coleman, who has been for some months past, lounging about the saloons of Colville, by chance caught sight of Madge Weston, a poor but very beautiful young working girl of the town. Madge is an orphan, and dependent upon her own exertions for the support of herself and her little sister of seven years of age, little Enid Weston."

"The villain Coleman became enamored of Madge Weston at first sight. From that moment he did not rest in his efforts to win her favor, even daring to importune her upon the street for her hand in marriage. Of course, Madge indignantly repelled him. Coleman at once formed a brutal plot to force her to come to his terms."

"He knew that the child Enid was the one idol upon which Madge concentrated the love of her pure young life. Learning this, he formed his plans accordingly and one day, when Madge was at work, he succeeded in kidnapping little Enid from the lodging house in Chester street. From that day to this, Madge has been in agony of spirit, and her friends have used every effort in human power to track down the brutal kidnapper. The only clew to his whereabouts was in the shape of a letter

from Indian Territory demanding that Madge should accept his offer of marriage or she should never gaze upon Enid's face again. It seems that the brute knew well how to wring the suffering sister's heart."

"The saddest of results are feared for the inconsolable and devoted sister Madge, and only the best efforts of medical men have averted a fatal type of brain fever. The case is a peculiarly dreadful one to contemplate, in view of the fact that Coleman is believed to be identical with the notorious monster Black Carlos of No Man's Land, who has at least six deserted wives in various parts of the West. That he would not hesitate to do fearful harm to little Enid should his revengeful nature so dictate, there is no doubt. The sympathy of the whole region is with Madge Weston, and if it lies within human power to do so, Black Carlos shall stretch hemp, and little Enid be rescued and restored to her devoted sister."

Frank Reade, Jr., read this thrilling account through with peculiar sensations. He made no comment for some time.

He was the son of Frank Reade, a noted inventor, and was himself one of the greatest inventors of the day. At the moment our story opens he is seated by his library table.

Long since he had acquired vast wealth by reason of his inventions. His fame was world wide as the wonderful inventor of the electric air-ship, the electric coach, and ice boat, and many wonders of steam. His was a fertile and ever active brain, and the mechanicians and scientists of the world bowed before his wonderful genius and subtle ingenuity.

His home was in the beautiful town of Readestown. The machine shops owned by him covered many acres, and employed many hundreds of skilled mechanicians.

"What yo' tink ob dat ting, Marse Frank?" asked Pomp, who had been watching his young employer with glistening eyeballs. "Am not dat a drefful ting, fo' suah?"

"Ugh! I should say it was," declared Frank, with a shiver. "But, in my opinion, the detectives are going to have hard work in catching the rascal."

"Jus' what I tinks, Marse Frank."

"You see, No Man's Land is a vast and partly unexplored territory. There are mountainous parts of it almost impenetrable to the ordinary traveler. The villain might hide there safely for years."

"Lor a'mighty!" gasped Pomp. "What am de po' chile to do?"

Before Frank could answer the street bell

rang. Pomp ran to answer the call, but reappeared quickly with a salver in his hand.

"A gentleman to see yo', sah."

Frank took the card and glanced at it.

"DUNCAN SNYDER,  
New York, Detective."

The young inventor gave a great start, and then said quickly:

"I wonder who he is? Well, you can show him up, Pomp."

The darky grinned and disappeared. A moment later a man of remarkable personal appearance came into the room.

He was of medium height, with sharp features and ferret eyes. He was attired in a flashy suit of plaid, and affected jewelry to a surprising extent. Certainly he was a unique character, yet at the same time one of the most successful detectives in America. He took off his hat and bowed before the young inventor.

"Mr. Frank Reade, Jr., I believe?" he exclaimed, politely. "I am honored with this interview, sir. As you see by my card, I am a detective. Necessarily I am, therefore, a man of few words."

"That is a sort I like," replied Frank, coolly. "I knew it. I will state my business at once, then."

"That will please me."

"In the first place I am a detective. In the second place I am employed by the Hon. Nelson Nevins of New York City. A friend of yours, I believe?"

"Mr. Nevins is a warm friend of mine," replied Frank.

"Exactly. To be brief, Mr. Nevins has sent me to interview you upon a very important subject. But first of all let me give you this."

The detective handed Frank Reade, Jr., a letter. The latter broke the seal and read:

"MY DEAR READE.—Doubtless you have read an account of the brutal deed of that arch scoundrel, Carlos Coleman, who is the kidnapper of little Enid Weston. I need not, therefore, enter into details, but suffice it to say that I am all stirred up in soul over this fearful deed of villainy. Now the detectives will never succeed in catching the scoundrel. Of course, all parties are strangers to me, but I am deeply interested all the same. I want to see that innocent child rescued. In my extremity I have thought of you. Now in all this broad country you alone can rescue the child. With some of your wonderful electric machines you can invade No Man's Land, and if you will do this, Frank, in the interest of suffering humanity, you will be lauded to the skies by a grateful people, gain the pleasure of a philanthropic and heroic deed and confer upon me the greatest of favors. Will you do it? I will pay all the expenses of the trip. Let me know by wire at once."

"NELSON NEVINS."



Frank Reade, Jr., read this epistle with strange emotions. He knew Nelson Nevins as a wealthy and philanthropic man, and he admired his noble qualities. No living person could have brought a stronger influence to bear upon the young inventor than Nelson Nevins.

Frank Reade, Jr., walked briskly across the floor several times. The astute detective did not interrupt him. Suddenly the young inventor paused and cried forcibly:

"It is just the chance I want to try my new invention, the Cyclone. Yes, I will do it, Mr. Snyder. You may go back to Mr. Nevins and—no, wait, there is a better way."

Frank seized a pen from the table and wrote upon a slip of paper the following message:

"TO HON. NELSON NEVINS.—Your man is here now. I am also interested and will go. Will send details later.  
FRANK READE, JR."

This message was given to a servant and just as the detective, Duncan Snyder, was about to express his gratification, Frank interrupted him by saying:

"Come with me, and I will show you the prince of all my electrical inventions. The Cyclone is the peer."

"I shall be most happy," declared Snyder, eagerly.

With this Frank dispatched Pomp for his carriage. It was at the door in a few moments and mounting the box Pomp drove them down to the machine shops. Leaving the carriage, Frank Reade, Jr., led the way into the high roofed and long building, the windows of which were sealed, light being admitted only from the roof.

The reason of this was that there were many unscrupulous inventive cranks hanging about in the vain hopes of getting at the secret of Frank's inventions. It was well to observe every precaution.

Once in the building, Frank Reade, Jr., shut the door. They passed through the vestibule, and in the main hall Duncan Snyder had the honor of being the first outsider to view the latest and greatest triumph of Frank Reade, Jr.'s, inventive genius, the wonderful Cyclone.

Snyder saw a long, cigar-shaped body made of the finest plate steel, some thirty-five feet in length, mounted upon wheels.

Both sets of wheels were adjusted beneath the boiler-like body of the Cyclone, upon revolving circles, so that the vehicle could be made to turn in the smallest possible space. A series of cogs and bands connected with the axles explained their connection with the motive power inside the steel-plated body. Each end of the Cyclone was molded almost to a peak, the end being a small orifice, through which at each end protruded for a few inches the muzzle of a dynamite gun, the peculiar invention of Frank Reade, Jr., himself, and which operated by means of electricity.

Midway in the Cyclone's body was a door of the finest woven steel network, and a small gang ladder was arranged for descent or ascent, which could be lowered or raised at will.

At intervals small loopholes pierced the metal sides of the cigar-shaped body, for the use of small arms by the inmates in case of an attack. Beneath the Cyclone a number of parallel steel rods connected transversely with the steering apparatus, the wheel being located in a pilot-house of dome shape, situated not many feet from the ram-like prow of the Cyclone. This pilot-house was faced with the thickest of glass, and protected by a bullet-proof network of steel, which, however, was so finely constructed as not to obstruct the view, while yet affording full protection.

The top of the cigar-shaped hull for some fourteen feet was flattened enough to afford quite a roomy deck, which was roofed and covered with a network of steel, the meshes being fine enough to repel a rifle-ball, yet affording an easy view about.

Access to the interior of the Cyclone was had from this deck by means of a little stairway and a steel hatch, which could be closed and fastened down.

Such was the wonderful machine or vehicle upon which Detective Snyder rested his wonder-struck gaze. For symmetry, beauty of finish and grace, the Cyclone far exceeded any other of Frank Reade, Jr.'s great inventions.

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Snyder, with a whistle of amazement. "That is a marvel in its way, Mr. Reade. However did you come to think of such a strange vehicle, anyway?"

The young inventor smiled.

"It is an idea I have had in mind many years," he declared. "I had a fancy that I should some day take a trip through the

Apache country, and this, you see, is the reason why I have made of the Cyclone such a movable fort in itself. Nothing but heavy cannon could destroy it, and I could attack the largest body of Indians on the plains with impunity, so long as they carried no heavier arms than Winchester rifles."

"But how can you hope to travel over a rough country in such a vehicle?"

"With the greatest of ease. Examine the wheels. You will see that the tires are adjustable. These are of steel, with sharp caulks, and will be used for climbing slippery or rocky heights or hills. These tires can be removed, and replaced by broad rubber bands for traveling over smooth or boggy ground."

"Wonderful! You seem to have considered and met every emergency. The motive power of course is electricity?"

"Yes; by means of my secret process of electric storage, I am able at all times to have command of sufficient power to keep the Cyclone in motion for an indefinite length of time. But come inside and take a look at the machinery."

With alacrity Snyder complied. Truly the Cyclone was the wonder of the present century!

"What an engine of war this would be!" he cried, enthusiastically. "You ought to consult the government with a view to constructing a number of Cyclones for military uses."

"No," replied Frank, tersely. "I am not in that line of business."

They entered the Cyclone through the steel-woven door, and if Snyder had been impressed with the exterior of the wonderful machine, he was doubly amazed with its interior.

## CHAPTER II.

### MAKING THE START.

The interior of the Cyclone's hull was divided into a number of compartments. All of these were elegantly furnished and glistening with bright work. From one room to another they passed.

Frank's private room was a marvel of elegance and luxurious appointment. Next was the scientific department and library, space being economized in the most wonderful manner. Every sort of a scientific instrument was kept here.

The dining room came next and then the forward cabin which contained a number of bunks where the crew slept. A small room beyond connected with the prow where was the deadly electric gun which was to sweep all before it in the Cyclone's path, an idea which had suggested to Frank the very appropriate name of the invention itself.

Returning they next visited the rear of the vehicle, which contained the engines and powerful electric dynamos which furnished the propulsive power. Electric signals connected the engineer with the pilot forward.

Then a visit was made to the deck. Here, the young inventor assured Snyder one could sit with perfect immunity from the fusillade of any number of rifles, the network being impervious to the leaden balls.

This finished the tour of inspection and they descended and were now driven back to the house. At the door they were met by a trim, comely little woman who smiled sweetly upon them.

"I will introduce you to Mrs. Reade, Mr. Snyder," said Frank, politely.

The detective bowed and murmured a polite compliment. Frank's wife, for such she was, replied in a musical voice and then flashed a quick, penetrating glance at her liege lord.

"Frank!" she exclaimed, with a little spasmodic cry. "Is it true that you are going away once more to leave me?"

"Now, be sensible, my dear," protested the young inventor with a cheery laugh. "Let me tell you all about it."

Mrs. Frank Reade, Jr., was a really sensible as well as a sympathetic little woman. She listened to her husband's story of Madge Weston's wrongs and her heart went out to the kidnapped child.

"Oh, Frank!" she cried, clasping his arm. "It would be wrong in me to hinder you. Of course I shall worry, but I shall pray for you. I know you will succeed, for you always do."

"Spoken like a sensible little wife," cried Frank, heartily. "I knew you would not seek to obstruct me in my line of duty."

So it was all settled that Frank Reade, Jr., should go in quest of little Enid Weston with his new invention, the electric Cyclone.

Preparations were at once made, and Duncan

Snyder, with tears in his eyes, wrung the young inventor's hand, crying excitedly:

"You will have the assistance of a divine power. I have but one more favor to ask. Will you allow me to accompany you, Mr. Reade?"

The young inventor hesitated a moment. He had always, on former trips, taken along with him Pomp, the faithful dorky already introduced to the reader, and a loyal Irishman by the name of Barney O'Shea. He also contemplated inviting Dr. Vaneyke, a dear friend and scientist, who had accompanied him on many previous excursions.

Barney O'Shea was constantly in Frank's employ, but was at present absent in the East visiting some relatives. He could be quickly called by wire, however. But Frank quickly made up his mind, and replied:

"Yes, Mr. Snyder, I think it would be no more than right for me to allow you to go along."

The detective expressed his thanks in a jubilant manner, and then went out to wire the Hon. Nelson Nevins of his great success.

In a very short space of time the news of Frank Reade, Jr.'s new invention and his errand of mercy sped across the country like a meteor. Intense excitement was created.

The papers were filled with glaring accounts of the perils of the trip into No Man's Land, the province without law, and the resort of numberless gangs of desperadoes and outlaws. There were many who predicted that little Enid Weston would never be rescued.

The Hon. Nelson Nevins sent Frank a letter of thanks and assurance of financial co-operation. Readstown now became the great center of interest in the whole country, and its hotels were filled to overflowing with an army of sightseers and cranks, all anxious to get a glimpse of the Cyclone, and many presumptuous enough to importune the young inventor for a free pass through his shops. Of course Frank refused this.

A characteristic letter was received from Barney O'Shea.

"DEAR MISTER FRANK.—The shamrock still waves and old Ireland is bound to be free. It's meself as will be on hand when the Cyclone goes out an' bad luck to Pomp, the naygur, if he don't threat me with the proper respect as a gentleman. Here's to yure health an' long life an' the best regards av yure troo friend,  
"BARNEY O'SHEA."

Frank smiled as he read this. He knew that Barney and Pomp, both faithful servitors, while the dearest of friends, were continually skylarking, each with the other. For the fun of the thing he handed Barney's letter to Pomp.

The woolly-pated son of Africa read it, and his eyes stuck out like glistening diamonds.

"Huh!" he grunted. "Dat am a'right fo' dat sassy Irishman to braggard me when he am two thousan' miles fom here. Jes' yo' wait till I sees him!"

The next day Dr. Vaneyke arrived just from the Smithsonian Institute.

He had his geological outfit with him, and greeted Frank joyfully.

"I received your invitation to go with you in the Cyclone to 'No Man's Land,'" he declared. "And I am glad to see that you have not forgotten an old friend. It is just the part of the country I have been wanting to visit for a long time."

A special compartment in the Cyclone was given up to the genial scientist. But the next visitor was one with whom Frank had a most serious argument.

A lady closely veiled and dressed in black, presented herself at the door of his residence in Readstown one morning. She sent in a card by the servant, and it read thus:

"MISS MADGE WESTON."

Of course the young inventor could not refuse the interview, though he suspected its purpose. Madge Weston was shown into the library, and lifting her veil, Frank saw her face revealed as that of a strikingly beautiful young girl.

"Mr. Reade!" she said, in a low and musical tone. "I felt it my duty to visit you and thank you in person for the kind interest which you have taken in my case. I shall pray to God, that you may succeed in saving my sister."

"My dear Miss Weston," replied Frank, in a kindly manner, "I can assure you that I will do my utmost."

"I can never hope to fully repay you."

"I do not seek reward. Your gratitude is ample pay, so do not trouble yourself on that score again."

"Then I must thank you, and though it all seems presumptuous, I dare to ask of you a favor."



Frank instinctively felt what was coming.

"Well?" he replied, quietly.

"I am not what you might presume, a timid and irresponsible girl, Mr. Reade. I am strong and resolute and possessed of a mighty determination. I have a great object to accomplish and you will not balk me."

"I think I understand you," replied Frank, quietly. "You want to accompany us on board the Cyclone."

"You have guessed the truth."

The young inventor gazed wonderingly into Madge Weston's face. He saw what seemed remarkable in the slight young girl—resolution and a firmness of purpose creditable to a strong man. But Frank Reade, Jr., knew that it would be folly to encourage this young girl in her hazardous purpose.

"Miss Weston," he said, firmly. "Our mission will bring us in contact with the most deadly of perils, involve us in the most thrilling of adventures and hardships."

"That is what I seek!" she cried, with feverish eagerness.

"It cannot be."

"You will not let me go?"

"No."

Frank knew the value of decision.

"I humbly beg of you to let me go."

"No! no!"

"But—"

"Miss Weston, let us end the matter here. I do not desire to be rude to you, but I shall do all in my power to rescue Enid. I cannot accede to your request."

This was equivalent to a dismissal, and she left the room. But Frank saw that a strange, confident light yet remained in her eyes. It puzzled him.

"She is surely a remarkable young woman," he muttered. "But then it would be folly to take her along."

Two days more and the Cyclone was to start. All preparations had been made, the hull had been stored with provisions, Barney had arrived and taken charge of the electrical engines and all was ready.

The night previous to the day set for the start Frank Reade, Jr., experienced a thrilling adventure, which came perilously near putting an end to his career.

It was quite dark and he had been hard at work on some maps in his room aboard the Cyclone.

Having finished the task, Frank arose and started to leave the building in which the Cyclone was stored. Barney and Pomp were engaged in some duties in the engine-room.

Just over the pilot house on the Cyclone's deck was a powerful search-light. This was now lit, and its rays made a focus upon the wall of the large building at its extreme end.

Barney had just turned the current on so that Frank would have plenty of light in finding his way out into the yard.

As the search-light's rays struck the wall of the building, Frank Reade, Jr., received a thrilling shock.

The door opening into the yard was open, and he fancied he saw a man's form flit through it into outer darkness. The young inventor suspected that some of the prowling scientific cranks, who continually hung about the shops, had gained an entrance into the yard. Certainly the door had not been left open by himself.

Instantly Frank drew his revolver and started on the run for the door. But his pursuit was useless. He searched the yard thoroughly, but no trace of any one could be found.

"That is queer," he muttered. "I could have sworn that somebody was here a moment since. It must have been my fancy."

Satisfied with this explanation he was just about to leave the yard, when the ground heaved, there was a fearful thunderous roar, the air was filled with sheets of flame and the entire side wall of the storage building fell out into the yard.

At the same moment Frank Reade, Jr., felt a talon clutch at his windpipe, he was thrown upon his back, and knew that he was in the clutches of a murderer.

### CHAPTER III.

#### IN THE MOUNTAIN PASS.

THAT moment would certainly have ended the career of Frank Reade, Jr., had it not been for the proximity of one who proved a rescuer.

He was in the clutches of a giant-framed man in whose hand was uplifted a dirk knife. This would have been plunged into Frank's breast but for a timely intervention.

Out of the gloom sprang a slender form and

the assailant was dealt a stunning blow upon the head. He fell back in a swoon and the rescuer, dropping an iron bar which he had picked up, grasped Frank's hand, for the young inventor, not in the least harmed, was instantly upon his feet.

"What is this?" cried Frank Reade, Jr., excitedly. "Barney! Pomp! all hands out! There's villainy afloat."

But Barney and Pomp had already come tumbling up out of the engine room of the Cyclone in fearful haste and took in the situation clearly.

The whole angle of the east wall of the building was in ruins and flames were mounting up to the roof. A terrific explosion was the explanation. Dynamite was no doubt the agent, and the purpose that of some insane machinist to wreck the Cyclone.

But by the most miraculous of fortune, the dynamite had failed to demolish the whole building, and while the Cyclone was badly shaken up it was not seriously injured.

Frank Reade and his rescuer faced each other in the glare of the search light.

The young inventor saw before him a tall, straight youth, with smooth, handsome face, effeminate in its beauty, yet daring in its expression.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed.

"You may call me Arthur Wallis," was the reply, in a clear voice.

"What are you doing here? What does all this mean?"

"It is lucky for you that I was here," declared Arthur Wallis, forcibly. "Rest assured I did not come here to trespass or do wrong. I overheard that villain formulating a plot to blow up your Cyclone and I followed him here. I was too late to prevent his firing the dynamite, but just in time to save your life."

"For which I am forever in your debt," replied Frank, warmly. "I shall repay you. But who is this insane crank?"

"I think his name is Lumpkins."

Frank bent down and scrutinized the unconscious man's face.

"Ay," he cried. "It is that insane machinist—Lander Lumpkins. He has once before tried to do this same thing. The law shall deal with him now."

The explosion had been heard for a long distance away and a great crowd had now collected. Officers rushed into the yard and took charge of the murderous crank. Firemen arrived with their engines to fight the flames.

The Cyclone was safely drawn out of the ruined building into the yard. It was a very narrow escape for the wonderful invention.

The flames were soon under control. A guard of police patrolled the place, the crank Lumpkins was taken away and the great excitement was over.

Frank now turned to his young preserver, Arthur Wallis, and said:

"You have saved my life. What can I do to repay you?"

The slender youth's eyes gleamed like stars. He was silent a moment. Then he said:

"The Cyclone starts to-morrow for No Man's Land, does she not?"

"Yes," replied Frank Reade, Jr.

"If you feel that you must repay me in any way, take me into your employ. Allow me to go with you on board the Cyclone."

"That I cannot do," replied Frank, quickly. "I will do anything else, but that I cannot do."

"That is the only thing I shall ask of you," said Wallis, quietly.

Frank gazed at the youth critically.

"Why do you want to go aboard the Cyclone?" he asked.

"There are many reasons," replied Wallis, evasively. "One is, that I am interested in the fate of little Enid Weston."

"But you can be of no possible use to us aboard the Cyclone," argued Frank. "Better remain quietly at home and await results."

"No," replied young Wallis, with an odd glittering light in his eyes. "I shall not remain at home. Whether I go on the Cyclone or not, I am going to No Man's Land. I shall see you there. Good-night!"

Before Frank could say a word in remonstrance the intrepid youth was gone. The young inventor stood immovable for some moments. He was deeply impressed with the manner and words of Wallis.

"It cannot be that he means what he says," he muttered. "Certainly he is a brave young fellow. I almost wish now that I had allowed him to accompany us."

But Wallis was gone and other matters

of an important sort now claimed Frank's attention.

Before morning, however, things were set to rights once more. Lumpkins, the crank who was responsible for all the damage, was held for trial in the Fall.

With the coming of daylight a vast throng began to gather about the machine shops.

The citizens of Readestown had organized and decorated the city with bunting, in honor of the Cyclone's departure.

Flags were up, brass bands were in full swing, and a reception committee waited on a dais in the public square to extend the farewell of the citizens to the renowned young inventor.

Dr. Vaneyke and Duncan Snyder, in full dress, were on the deck by the pilot house. Frank joined them there. Barney was in the engine-room, and Pomp was at the wheel.

Promptly at nine o'clock the wide gates of the yard swung open. A bell tinkled, Barney pressed the key to the first dynamo, the machinery moved, and the Cyclone, a mighty triumph of inventive genius, glided like a bird across the yard and out into the thoroughfare.

Cheers wild and tumultuous went up as the Cyclone glided down the street to the public square. Here an ovation was held. Frank Reade, Jr., shook hands with his friends, embraced and kissed his wife and children, and then sprang aboard of the Cyclone.

He waved his hand to Pomp, the bell tinkled in the engine-room, and the crowd fell back as the Cyclone started on her journey.

Out on to the prairie the wonderful machine ran like a bird. In a short time the spires and roofs of Readestown were left in the distance.

New villages were encountered, and everywhere throngs of people gathered. On the level stretches of prairie the Cyclone could average twenty-five miles an hour, so rapidly they made the long run to the banks of the Missouri.

Fortunately the clever young inventor had foreseen the difficulty of fording rivers and streams, and had provided the Cyclone with pontoon sections underneath the hull, which, inflated with air, easily buoyed her up. It then became an easy matter to extemporize paddle-wheels out of the forward trucks, and a rudder was provided for easy adjustment at the stern.

In this manner the streams and rivers were easily and expeditiously crossed. For days the Cyclone kept on her way to the South-west. Then the country began to grow wilder, houses were the exception, and they were soon running through the heart of a mighty wilderness.

Frank Reade, Jr., knew that they were rapidly drawing nearer to the boundary of that region known as No Man's Land. Wild animals were common, herds of buffalo and deer were encountered. Slight skirmishes with Indians were of daily occurrence, but the aborigines generally fled at the first ball from the deadly electric gun.

The Cyclone just at dusk one day came into a miserable mining settlement at the base of a mighty range of hills. A stage road led through a deep pass in these hills and the location of this was what Frank Reade, Jr., wished to learn.

The denizens of the town gathered wondering about the Cyclone. Frank Reade, Jr., manifested friendliness and essayed to gain his desired information.

"Yas, stranger," one herculean miner condescended to reply. "I'll tell ye where that pass is. Turn that spur of the mounting and cut in through the pines. Goin' through there ter-morrer?"

"Yes," replied Frank.

"I'd advise ye not to."

"Why?"

"Red Mike and his gang lay in that pass for every stranger. There ain't a stage coach goes through that ain't held up."

But Frank Reade, Jr., laughed. What was Red Mike to him? Should the robber gang attempt to attack the Cyclone they would very likely get more than they bargained for.

So the young inventor allowed the warning to slip his mind. The next morning at an early hour the Cyclone was under way. It was long before sunrise and was yet pitchy dark.

But the search-light cast a radiance ahead, and the Cyclone picked its way along easily. Soon the pass was entered, and a stupendous cut in the mountain wall it was, too.

The search-light threw radiance far ahead, and just as they were in the deepest and widest part of the gorge thrilling events came to the fore. The first warning came in the shape of a clanking sound like the manipulation of



chains, and the Cyclone came to a halt. Her engines were stopped instantly. Frank Reade, Jr., sprang on deck and a thrilling scene at that moment made all comprehensive to him.

A half score of iron grappels attached to heavy chains, which were in turn welded into the cliff, held the wheels of the Cyclone on all sides. The strongest engines in the world could not have moved her from that position. At the same instant a chorus of wild shouts went up on the murky air, and the pass literally swarmed with armed desperadoes. The situation was critical indeed.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### IN NO MAN'S LAND.

HELD as by a hundred giants in clutches of steel, the Cyclone was powerless to move. The trick of the outlaws was certainly a most clever one.

Revealed in the glare of the search-light, Frank Reade, Jr., was unable to estimate their number. But he wasted no time in useless speculation. Action was what was needed now.

With a loud cry of warning he sprang below decks and called to Pomp to go forward and man the electric gun.

"Sweep the pass!" cried the young inventor, excitedly. "They will break the Cyclone all to pieces if we do not beat them off."

This was true. Held as it was by the strong iron grappels, the Cyclone could be badly battered and injured by close contact with heavy tledges or boulders in the hands of the foe.

While Pomp was gone to work the electric gun, the others with their Winchester sprang to the loopholes.

First, however, Frank turned a knob and charged the outer steel railings of the Cyclone with the powerful electric fluid.

Already several of the outlaws had gripped these but they were hurled unconscious to the ground.

But a score of the robbers were now close beside the Cyclone. These saw the fate of their predecessors and avoided touching the rail. But as Frank Reade, Jr., had feared, they hurled heavy missiles at the Cyclone, which the metal sides resisted, though the heaviest battered them some.

At the same time, avoiding the rail, several sprang on deck, but Barney and Frank Reade, Jr., greeted these with rattling volleys from their Winchester, and thus drove them back.

By this time Pomp had got the electric gun trained. He drew careful sight and pressed the knob which connected the vacuum chamber of the gun with the charged electric wire.

In a moment the pneumatic tube collapsed, sending the dynamite bolt out with fearful force. It struck the ground just in the midst of a group of the outlaws.

The result was terrific.

A fearful glare of light, a rumbling explosion, and that group of outlaws vanished from view forever.

The thrilling work of the electric gun was what carried the day. Though they were bold, desperate men, the outlaws had not the hardihood to withstand such fearful bolts of death.

Again and again the electric gun thundered, sending its destroying bolt through the pass. The outlaw band broke and incontinently fled.

It was a complete victory. In the glare of the search-light, not one live outlaw could be seen in the pass. Duncan Snyder was so elated with the victory that he doffed his hat and yelled:

"Hurrah for the Cyclone! Nothing can defeat it."

Even prosaic Dr. Vaneyke attested his jubilation over their success. As for Barney and Pomp, they executed several lively antics in the cabin and then scampered forward as Frank Reade, Jr., called for them.

The outlaws were beaten off, to be sure, but the Cyclone was as yet unable to proceed.

The strong iron grappel hooks so skillfully contrived by the outlaws still held the machine immovable. It was essential that these should be removed.

Barney and Pomp were commanded by Frank Reade, Jr., to go out with cold chisels and hammers and cut the chains, so that the hooks could be freed. It was arranged that the others, with their Winchester, would keep back any of the outlaws who would venture to make an attack in the meanwhile.

Now that the scrimmage was over and the danger past, Barney could not resist his incli-

nation to hector Pomp. He seized the tools procured for him, and cried:

"Be jabbers, if ye'd only give me leave, Mister Frank, it's weldin' thim chains onto the naygur I'd be afther doin'. Whurroo! If he hed his just deserts, he'd be languishin' in some deep dungeon, that he would."

"G'long dar wi' you, you good-fur-nuffin' Irishman," snorted Pomp, angrily. "Don' you gib me none ob yo' sass, or I'll fo'git my sivilization as a gen'laman, an' frow you ober dat ar rail."

"Begorra, ye'd better learn to spshell able first," retorted Barney. "Mither av Moses! fer half a cint I'd tache ye Irish manners, that I would."

"Golly! ain't yo' smaht?"

"Go on, naygur!"

"That is enough," cried Frank, authoritatively. "This is no time for skylarking. Cut those chains as quick as ever you can. Daylight is coming, and I want to be out of the pass by sunrise."

Pomp started down the gang ladder. Frank Reade, Jr., walked into the cabin. Barney's Celtic nature was overcharged with mischief, and such a good opportunity now offered to vent his spirit that he could not help but avail himself of it.

A pail of very dirty water sat at the gangway landing. It had been used for washing that side of the deck.

Quite unintentionally, of course, Barney kicked it over. The contents, like a deluge, went down upon Pomp's head, just as he reached the ground.

For a moment the ducky was overwhelmed, and seemed likely to float away. But he emerged from the bath spluttering and gasping, and mad as a hornet.

Barney had sprung from the ladder. They were on even ground now, and Pomp lowered his head and made for the Celt.

So sudden was the attack that Barney could not get out of the way, and Pomp's catapult-like head struck him full in the abdomen. For a moment Barney hardly knew whether it would be expedient to even breathe again or not. Then he rolled over upon the ground, holding onto his stomach and groaning as if mortally wounded.

"I'll fix yo', yo' big 'Iish loafah," sputtered Pomp, digging the water out of his eyes with his fists. "Golly sakes! Yo' ober frow anymore of dat dirty watah on me agin, an' I'll spile yo' beauty fo' ober, dat I will."

And to give emphasis to this declaration, Pomp gave expression to a wild African yell. This brought Doctor Vaneyke and Snyder, the detective, to the rail to see what was the matter. They laughed heartily when they saw Pomp's drenched clothing and Barney's position on the ground.

The two roysterers had, however, their fill, and now with the sobriety of deacons proceeded to work upon the chains.

It was quite a job to cut the big links, but it was finally done and the wheels of the Cyclone freed.

This had hardly been done when a warning cry came from Snyder. The detective pointed aloft and cried:

"My God! look at that! We are doomed!"

All glanced aloft. Just on the verge of the precipice above, a number of the outlaws were engaged in toppling over a tremendous stone of many tons weight, and which must fall directly upon the Cyclone.

Frank Reade, Jr., saw the awful peril, and for an instant his blood was like ice in his veins.

Then he made action.

"To the pilot-house!" he cried to Pomp. "We must save the Cyclone!"

With a quick leap he went through the hatchway and into the dynamo-room. He threw the switch clean out, and gave the machinery the full force of the dynamos.

The result was tremendous. The Cyclone leaped ahead like an antelope. It was not a moment too soon. Those on deck saw the mighty boulder come crashing down and strike the ground in the exact place where the Cyclone had been but an instant before.

Up the gorge went the Cyclone at a lightning pace. A baffled yell came from the outlaws.

Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder tried a shot at them with quite good effect. But the Cyclone was now rapidly leaving the scene behind.

It was but a very little while before they emerged from the pass, and now came out upon a wide plain, almost devoid of vegetation, which extended as far as the eye could see.

They were now in No Man's Land, and all gazed curiously about them. The mountain range was fading behind them as the coach ran on at a swift rate of speed. Then the grass began to assume a greener, more natural appearance, and the plain to break into numberless small depressions.

Also, far ahead, the blue-crowned summits of mountains were to be seen plainly. The sun had now arisen, and all nature seemed to emerge from darkness into glorious life.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke, as he stood on deck with his glass in his hand. "Is not this a wonderful country, Mr. Snyder?"

"It is that, in more ways than one," replied Snyder, who stood by him. "It seems strange that all these years this small strip of Uncle Sam's territory should have been literally a genuine 'No Man's Land.' It is certainly a wonderful thing, is it not?"

"I agree with you," replied the doctor, who had taken a deep fancy to Snyder. "What a Paradise this has been for rascals, thieves, and the like!"

"I should say so."

"I hope you will succeed in rescuing Miss Weston from the villainous kidnappers. In Mr. Reade you have a powerful ally."

"I am aware of that," replied the detective. "And it was certainly philanthropic in Mr. Reade to yield his valued assistance."

The deck of the Cyclone was now quite clear, save for the presence of these two. Pomp was in the pilot-house steering the Cyclone, and Barney was in the engine room. Frank Reade, Jr., was in his cabin looking over some papers.

Suddenly Dr. Vaneyke gave a quick start and a sharp cry.

"By Jupiter!" he exclaimed. "Do you see that, Mr. Snyder?"

The detective gazed in the direction indicated by the doctor's finger. Far away on the distant horizon a long black line was seen to spring up and mount upward into the heavens.

They were running at the time over the floor of a prairie which was covered with deep, matted grass.

This was as dry as tinder, and a match would have started a fire quickly enough. The same thought crossed the mind of each as Snyder exclaimed:

"It looks like smoke?"

"So it does."

Again they scanned the horizon.

"And it is!" cried Dr. Vaneyke, excitedly. "I can see flames also. My God! the prairie is on fire! I think we ought to let Frank know at once."

"No!" exclaimed Snyder. "Wait a moment. Which way is the wind?"

"It is blowing this way," cried Dr. Vaneyke. "Fires on these Western prairies travel with tremendous speed. We will hardly have time to get out of the way I fear."

He instantly sprang to the hatchway and called down to Frank Reade, Jr. The young inventor was on deck almost instantly.

"The prairie on fire!" he exclaimed. "In what quarter?"

It was easy for him to see that the flames were approaching from the north. He instantly called to Pomp in the pilot-house.

"Change your course, Pomp!" he cried. "Bear off to the southwest."

The faithful ducky instantly obeyed and the Cyclone went spinning away in this new direction. But suddenly what appeared like a bar of silver appeared in the distance in their course.

"What is that?" cried Snyder.

Frank brought his glass to bear upon it and an exclamation escaped his lips of dismay and chagrin:

"We're in a bad pickle!" he declared dubiously. "That is a lake directly in our path. We are between two fires."

#### CHAPTER V.

##### A CLEW OBTAINED.

THIS was true. To be sure the Cyclone was so constructed that a river or creek could be crossed on the pontoons with which it was provided. But a lake which might be many miles wide and capable of developing rough water was another matter.

However, Dr. Vaneyke cried:

"I'll tell you, Frank. We can go out into the lake far enough to avoid the flames. Let them burn to the water's line."

"In the van of the flames," said Frank, dubiously, "there will be very likely hundreds of wild animals. These will be forced into the lake and unless we get out beyond their reach



there would be great danger of swamping the Cyclone."

Viewed from any standpoint the situation was bad. But Frank Reade, Jr., wasted but a brief time in deciding what to do.

He went into the pilot-house and took the helm from Pomp. He rang the bell for more speed, and the Cyclone went forward like a bird.

The fire was every moment becoming plainer. The heavens to the northwest was becoming black as midnight and those on deck fancied they could even hear the distant thunder of the flames.

The situation was truly a critical one. Should the flames reach the Cyclone its career would be speedily terminated. But Frank Reade, Jr., was not one to be easily defeated.

As they drew nearer to the lake now it was seen that it was a vast body of water many miles in breadth.

Moreover, its shores were precipitous bluffs which the Cyclone could not easily descend. Frank Reade, Jr., saw this at a glance, and at once decided upon a new move.

He ran hastily to the stern of the Cyclone and let out a long wire many feet in length. Previous to this he had given Pomp directions to change the course of the Cyclone in an oblique direction to the present one.

The wire dragging behind the Cyclone for several hundred feet Frank speedily connected with one of the dynamos. The instant the current was turned on, so powerful was it that the wire became red hot and the grass along its line sprang into flame.

In a few minutes a half mile had been covered thus, and a long line of fire was moving rapidly over the prairie toward the lake a mile distant. Then the Cyclone was brought to a standstill.

The young inventor's purpose was easily seen.

The fire would travel toward the lake as rapidly as the fire in the rear could make its way up to the burnt line. As the distant fire had four or five miles to cover it was safe to say that the line of fire set by the electric wire would reach the lake first.

This would leave a broad space, which would be a safe ground for the Cyclone to rest upon until the larger fire had spent itself.

It was a plan based upon the idea of setting one fire to meet another. It worked to perfection.

In a short while a space several hundred feet wide was burned off, and on to this ground the Cyclone ran. The fire reached the lake long before the larger fire reached the edge of the burnt district.

The scene was an appalling one. The larger prairie fire came on with the speed of a race horse.

Before it there ran a varied herd of wild animals, hundreds in number. They were frantic in their rush for life. The flames were close upon them.

There were buffaloes and antelopes, wolves, foxes and smaller quadrupeds in large numbers. Frank Reade, Jr., caused the Cyclone to be turned bow on to meet them.

Such a surging mass crowding one upon another, made it look likely that the Cyclone might be badly damaged by a collision. But Frank Reade, Jr., had foreseen this and took precautionary measures.

The electric gun was trained and in readiness and as the surging mass of animals, tons upon tons in weight came down over the burned section, the piece was discharged.

There was a burst of flame, a stunning shock, and a line was literally mowed through the oncoming ranks. They as quickly closed up but again the electric gun threw its terrific bolt of death into their midst.

The animals were killed in such numbers that a veritable mound of them was formed. It was a bulwark for the Cyclone, however, for the mass separated like the waves of the sea, and went either side of the heap, leaving the Cyclone unharmed.

The frenzied animals went on to the shore of the lake and plunged into the waters. In a few moments they had passed, the fire had reached the end of its run, and a mighty last column of black smoke rolled upward as it expired.

The Cyclone was saved and the thrilling danger averted.

But the events of the day were not over. Out of the black smoke cloud dashed what looked like a riderless horse.

A great cry escaped Dr Vaneyke's lips which drew the attention of both Snyder and Frank Reade, Jr.

They sprang to the rail and Frank Reade, Jr., gasped:

"My God! The rider has fainted and is hanging over the horse's neck. They are going on to their doom."

"You are right," cried Snyder.

"Can nothing be done?" cried Dr. Vaneyke, excitedly.

"Yes," exclaimed the young inventor.

Acting upon impulse and with the sole idea of saving the rider's life, he raised his Winches-ter and fired.

The horse gave a plunge into the air, staggered and fell. The unconscious rider was thrown several yards away.

It seemed like a risky and desperate measure for Frank Reade, Jr., to adopt. But it was, despite this, the only way in which to save the rider.

"Quick! lower the gangway," cried Frank Reade, Jr., as he sprang to the rail.

Barney and Pomp had come out on deck now and they hastened to lower the ladder. Then Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder accompanied Frank to the spot where the horse and rider lay.

The horse was dead, but the rider moved slightly as they came up. It was seen that he was conscious.

But his face and person were badly burned. Indeed, the clothing had been burned from his back, which in places was badly blistered.

He glanced at his rescuers with half-open eyes and groaned. Frank Reade, Jr., bent down over him.

"You are badly burned!" he cried. "You had a hard race."

"You are right," replied the wounded man, in a husky voice. "But who the dickens are you?"

"We are friends," replied Frank, simply. "Are you able to stand upon your feet?"

The man made an effort to move his limbs. "I think so," he replied.

His appearance was that of a dark complexioned man, some forty years of age, with a not very prepossessing cast of features. He was dressed in a semi-Mexican costume, with a richly spangled velvet jacket.

Then you were not hurt seriously by the fall?" asked Frank Reade, Jr.

"No, I think not, stranger. I reckon I'm a bit burned, that's all. Did you shoot my hoss?"

"I did."

"Then I owe you my life. If he'd kept on I'd gone to my death. Shake, stranger!"

Frank Reade, Jr., gripped hands with the fellow.

"My name is Matt Cole, an' I'm a stock herder on this range. What's yours?"

"It is Frank Reade, Jr."

The so-called stock herder arched his eyebrows and said:

"I've heard that name somewhere before. But that ain't of any account. What's that curious looking thing on wheels over there?"

"Some kind of a new steam plow?"

"That is, the electric Cyclone," replied Frank.

"Cyclone!" exclaimed Cole, in a puzzled way. "It looks to me like some kind of a new fangled machine to lay railroad tracks."

At this all laughed.

"Well, if you're able to walk," said the young inventor, "and will walk over to the Cyclone, we'll try and do something for your burns as well as explain the mechanism of the machine to you."

"Wall, I'll allow you're powerful kind!" declared Matt Cole. "I think I kin do it all right. I'll accept your invite."

With a little effort he got upon his feet. The pain of his burns caused him to wince a little, but he stood it well.

Arrived at the Cyclone, they went on board. Cole seemed dumfounded at the wonderful peculiarities of the electric Cyclone, though his small, black eyes surveyed things with that glittering, cunning light in them, which caused Pomp to remark to Barney:

"I jes' tole yo', 'Ish, I don' like de looks ob dat feller, fer suah! He am got eyes dat done take in eberyting."

"Begorra, I'm wid yer fer onct, naygur!" muttered Barney.

Frank Reade, Jr., dressed the fellow's wounds, and then kindly took him over the Cyclone. After this was done, Frank invited him to a dinner in the cabin. The young inventor had a reason for all this.

Seated at a table Cole expressed his mind.

"Well, I'll be doggoned if I ever seen anything like this before. You live right aboard of this thing and travel around like a nabob, eh?"

"Well, we manage to get about," replied Frank, cheerfully. "Have some of the salad, Mr. Cole. By the way, I suppose you are an old plainsman?"

"Wall, I reckon so. Forty years or more on ther cattle trail."

"Ah, then you are well acquainted in this region?"

"A little bit."

"Do you know a man by the name of Carlos Coleman?"

The question was a sudden one and had a curious effect upon Matt Cole. He dropped his knife and fork and bent a glance upon Frank which almost made the young inventor shiver.

"What?" exploded Cole.

"Do you know him?" asked Frank, coolly.

For a moment Cole looked steadily at Frank. Then he replied:

"Wall, I've heerd of him."

"He is a desperado, eh?"

"Dunno what you mean. He's a dead shot Carlos is, and—that makes me think. He is down in this region jest now. Did ye want to see him? Why don't ye call on him?"

As he spoke Cole bent a keen, scrutinizing gaze upon Frank. Seeing that the young inventor hesitated, he continued:

"Oh, ye needn't have no fears about me. Carlos an' I don't love each other. If ye're out here to do any bizness with him an' I kin help ye, let me know."

Frank Reade, Jr., believed that he had hit the keynote.

"Then you're just the man we want," he declared. "I'll tell you what we are out here for, and what we want of Carlos Coleman. If you can help us, we will pay you well."

Frank Reade, Jr., stepped to the cabin door and called Duncan Snyder, the detective. As Frank's back was turned, the herdsman partly arose from his seat with clenched hands and a perfectly devilish light in his dark eyes. He was himself, however, when Frank turned once more.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SHREWD TRICK.

DUNCAN SNYDER entered the cabin in response to Frank Reade, Jr.'s call, and the young inventor motioned him to a seat.

"Snyder," he said, quietly, "I believe there is a way for us to locate our man at once. The sooner the better, of course."

"I agree with you," replied the detective. "How can it be done?"

"Mr. Cole here declares that he knows Carlos well, and of his present whereabouts, and agrees to help us."

Snyder gazed at Cole. The latter's gaze was averted.

"Is that so?" he exclaimed.

"Wall, yes, I reckon it's so," replied Cole, in a careless way.

"Do you really know where Coleman is at present?"

"I think I do."

"And you can take us to the place?"

"I reckon so."

"All right. You are just the man we want," cried the detective, rubbing his hands briskly.

"But I'd like to ask ye one question, gents," said Cole.

"What?"

"What do ye want of Carlos?"

Frank Reade, Jr., and Snyder exchanged glances. Then the detective declared:

"Well, there is no use in beating about the bush; we want him upon the charge of kidnapping little Enid Weston. At the same time, we want to rescue the child, whom he holds for a ransom."

Cole drew a long whistle.

"And that's what ye're out here for with this funny machine?" he cried. "Wall, I'll be darned! Howsomdever, I'll help ye all I can to capture Black Carlos. Yes, I will."

The herdsman's words ended in a singular chuckle.

"Well, sir," said Frank, "why procrastinate? If you will tell us the direction to take we will go right along."

"Black Carlos," cried Cole, springing to his feet, "can be found at the old Dobe Ranch on the Big Trail or Cherokee Path, jest about twenty miles over this perray. Let yer machine out an' I'll go out forord an' tell ye how ter go."

It was but a few moments' work for Pomp, by Frank's orders, to turn the head of the Cyclone to the north-west. Then, with Cole, the young inventor opened a door in the wire netting and went out forward of the pilot-house.



Here the herdsman could give directions plainly enough, and the Cyclone cut across the fire-swept plain like a bird.

Cole manifested great delight over the novel ride and his keen eye took in every detail of the Cyclone's mechanism. Mile after mile was covered, and then, suddenly, at high noon Cole pointed to the horizon and cried:

"See that black speck? Well, that's the old Dode Ranch. I hope we'll find Carlos there."

Everybody now became agog with interest as they approached the ranch, which was a long, low-roofed structure made of adobe bricks, after the Mexican pattern.

It bore a deserted appearance and in response to Frank's inquiry, Cole said:

"It haint been occupied much for some years. The man what used to operate this range got unpopular with the boys and was found dead one morning."

The Cyclone approached the ranch rapidly and soon was within a few hundred feet of the main gate. And yet there was no sign of life about the place.

The gate was open showing a broad yard beyond, and Cole cried out:

"Run right into the yard. It's the best way."

Accordingly the Cyclone was run into the yard and brought to a halt in its center. A high stockade ran around the enclosure, that side of the hacienda or ranch having a spacious piazza.

But no living being was visible. In the center of the yard was a bubbling spring.

The windows were broken out and the doors were unhung. There were shot-holes in the partitions, and the place looked as if a battle had once been fought there.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Frank Reade, Jr., in amazement. "This place looks as if it had been through a siege."

But Cole only chuckled and said:

"Now, I'll tell ye about Carlos. He's on the other side there working a small silver claim, if he is here at all. Jest you wait a minute till I see."

Cole climbed down the gangway and ran across the yard. He vanished into the ranch. In a few moments he reappeared waving his arm excitedly.

"One of ye come here!" he cried, in a hushed voice. "Let Mr. Reade come."

Frank Reade, Jr., climbed down the gang ladder and went to join the herdsman. He stepped upon the piazza of the deserted ranch when a thrilling thing happened.

Matt Cole clutched his arm, and instantly the heavy gate to the enclosure fell with a bang.

From the ranch there bounded forth a score of armed men. Several of these covered the young inventor with their repeating rifles.

A hoarse, ringing laugh escaped Matt Cole's lips, and he cried exultantly:

"Ha, ha, ha! this is the time I fooled ye! Didn't know who I was, did ye? So you're in this country to cage Black Carlos, eh? Mebbe ye will and mebbe ye won't. There's one thing sure! If ye dare to fire on us, yer smart young inventor here is a dead man instantly!"

Frank Reade, Jr., was dumfounded at this sudden revelation, and his friends on board the Cyclone were horrified, and for a moment, unable to act.

"Och hone! the blasted omadhouns have got Frank, for sure!" cried Barney, frantically. "Fo' de good Lor' dat am so," cried Pomp, wildly.

Then both of these devoted servitors grabbed their Winchesters and made a rush for the gang ladder. They fully intended to go to Frank's rescue, and no doubt would have sacrificed their lives then and there for him.

But Dr. Vaneyke and Duncan Snyder both interposed and held them back, while the doctor shot the iron-screened door, and said, in a sharp voice:

"Hold on! Don't do anything rash. Don't you see that the first move you make will cost Frank his life? They have the drop on him."

"Massy sakes! dat am a fac'," gasped Pomp, who would have turned pale if he could.

"What am we going to do?"

"Begorra, I'd do something purty quick, I would," spluttered Barney, fingering the trigger of his rifle nervously. "Och, fer a shot at the spalpeens!"

"Don't be foolish!" vehemently exclaimed Snyder. "We have got to compromise with the villains in some way."

"Be jabbers, I'd loike to compromise wid 'em wid the electric gun!"

"Mr. Snyder!" said Dr. Vaneyke, "if you

will parley with the villains I will try and keep these two belligerents back."

"All right, doctor."

Snyder went to one of the loop-holes in the wire screen and said:

"I say, you, Matt Cole, if that is your name, I'd like to speak with you."

"Eh!" exclaimed that worthy in a swaggering way. "You may call me by my right name if you please."

"What the devil is that?"

"Carlos Coleman."

The detective gave a start and then indulged in a keen scrutiny of the wrretch. It was the first time he had ever seen Black Carlos.

"Oho! So you are the man who stole away little Enid Weston, eh?"

"I reckon so," replied Coleman with an oath. "And you're the whipper-snapper of a detective who has come out here on my track, eh?"

"I am a detective!"

"Exactly!" exclaimed Coleman, with a jeering laugh. "Ye're out here in style ain't ye. But yer style ain't the kind what will capture Black Carlos, you bet."

"We shall see."

"Of course you will. That's a pretty fine machine you've got there, ain't it? A Cyclone, eh? Well, that will do me right comfortable to jog around in over this country. I reckon I'll trouble you to open the door and come out."

"No, I don't think you will, sir," replied Snyder, with sarcasm.

"Then you won't come out?"

"No."

"But ye're entrapped?"

"I cannot see it in that light. On the other hand, we call on you to give up your prisoner, or we'll blow you into eternity—you and your thieving gang—with our electric gun. That is what you can depend on."

"I don't believe ye'll fire on us while we have your head man in our clutches," declared Coleman.

"Certainly we shall not, if you set him free."

"Bah!" exclaimed Coleman, angrily. "Do you take me for a fool?"

"I take you for one of the greatest rascals on earth."

"Well, that ain't the point. Are ye going to surrender, or not? If ye don't, Frank Reade, Jr., dies."

Coleman held up his hand to give the word to his men to shoot Frank. But Dr. Vaneyke cried:

"Wait a moment. Give us time to decide."

Then the four defenders of the Cyclone held a swift consultation. The result was that a daring move was decided upon.

But before they could execute it Coleman seemed suddenly to have changed his plan of operations.

Frank Reade, Jr., was suddenly seized by the five men and hustled into the ranch. Coleman followed, the other outlaws disappeared instantly, and in a twinkling the courtyard was deserted.

"Whurroo!" cried Barney, excitedly. "They are sneaking away with Frank. Afther thim an' don't let a man escape!"

But at that moment the voice of Black Carlos rang through the ranch:

"I will hold Frank Reade, Jr., now for ransom. If he will reveal to me the secret of his machine, and pay me a large sum of money he may go free. If not he dies."

The next moment the ring and clatter of horses' hoofs were heard in the courtyard beyond. All this was instantly comprehensive to the occupants of the Cyclone.

"Quick!" cried Dr. Vaneyke. "They're taking Frank away on horseback. Somebody open that gate! We must chase them."

In an instant Barney leaped from the Cyclone's deck and ran to open the gate.

But the strength of twenty men could not have moved it. However, Dr. Vaneyke was not to be bluffed so easily.

Barney came back, and the doctor went below decks. The electric gun was trained to bear upon the gate.

There was a brilliant flash, a deafening report, and the place where the gate had stood was clear ground. Many yards about the ruins were scattered.

With a cheer, those on board the Cyclone sprang to their posts, and the wonderful invention ran out upon the prairie.

Pomp was in the pilot-house. Far away across the prairie was seen a body of horsemen.

The Cyclone was instantly put under the highest pressure of speed, and thundered in pursuit of the kidnappers.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CRYSTAL CAVERN.

ACROSS the prairie, in mad pursuit of Coleman and his gang, thundered the Electric Cyclone.

The prime impulse was to overtake the villains, and rescue Frank Reade, Jr. Pomp was at the wheel, and held the Cyclone on a straight course, while Barney made the dynamo hum.

Dr. Vaneyke and Duncan Snyder, with Winchesters, were on deck and at the loopholes in the steel netting to give the villains a shot as soon as they should come within range.

The electric gun would have reached them at even a greater distance, but it was not deemed safe to use it for fear that the bolt might harm Frank Reade, Jr., as much as his captors.

There was only one way, and this was to run down the villains. This would have been an easy thing on a straight course, for the Cyclone could fly with the speed of the wind.

The horses would easily have been overtaken. But a circumstance, which was quite unforeseen, put a different face upon matters in quick time.

It chanced that a large butte or hill was within a few miles reach of the Dobe Ranch, and toward this the outlaws seemed to be directing their course. They spurred and whipped their horses furiously, for they knew well enough that the monster thundering in their rear meant death.

The butte was heavily wooded and consisted of several small hills. Between these was a narrow pass, and into this the outlaws dashed.

Pomp saw this and held his wheel firm. He did not stop the Cyclone for fear that the villains would give them the slip.

He reasoned that if the horses could get through the pass, the Cyclone ought to find footing of some sort. So he never signaled Barney to abate speed, but let the Cyclone shoot into the pass.

In between the high, rocky walls whisked the Cyclone, and around an angle. The wheels with their metal grips went clattering over the stony bed of the pass.

There was no time, however, for putting on the rubber tires, so Pomp held the Cyclone steady. The outlaws were not two hundred yards ahead, and suddenly vanished around a bend.

The pass was a wonderful freak of nature.

The walls on either side rose perpendicular for many hundred feet. The floor of the pass was of stone, and as smooth and polished as asphalt pavement.

There was nothing to obstruct the progress of the Cyclone. Straight on she ran to the angle around which the outlaws had vanished.

Pomp took a long turn and they cleared the bend. But the next instant a cry of horror went up from everybody's lips.

The horses of the outlaws had disappeared, and not fifty yards distant the pass seemed to come to an end in a blank wall of stone as black as ebony. Pomp jingled the bell for Barney to shut off power.

But there was not half time in which to check the Cyclone. It looked as if she would be dashed to flinders against the blank wall, when it was suddenly seen that this was an optical illusion created by the lights and shadows of the pass, and that the blank wall was really the mouth of a mighty, high-roofed cavern. In a twinkling the Cyclone had flashed into this and was in darkness.

Fortunately Pomp had presence of mind enough to press the button which set the search-light ablaze. In an instant a wonderful scene was revealed.

The Cyclone came to a halt. The electric light dispelled the darkness, and it was seen that the Cyclone's bow was not ten feet from a pillar of rock, to have struck which would have demolished the machine.

This pillar was only one of many, as perfect in symmetry and polish as if fashioned by the hand of man. The scene spread before those on board the Cyclone was one of a dazzling sort.

For the floor of this wonderful cavern, its arches and pillars were resplendent, as if made of glittering diamonds. In fact, the glare of the search-light upon the twinkling mass blinded all.

Then a great cry went up from the lips of all. Forgotten even was the mission which had brought them into this wonderful place.

"Fo' de Lor' sakes!" gasped Pomp, as he came rushing out of the pilot-house, "where in de name ob goodness am we got to now?"

"Begorra, it's all the stupidity of yeself, ye



ebonized monkey!" cried Barney, tripping Pomp up as he passed. "Take that for yer foolhardiness! It's in some hole in the ground we might be now as loikely as here. Why didn't ye whistle for me to sthoph, ye sunburned heathen ye?"

Pomp measured his length on the deck. For a moment he saw stars, for his head came in contact with a corner of the staircase. But he was upon his feet instantly.

"Hi dar, yo' big l'ish Mick!" he yelled, rolling his eyes up till nothing could be seen but the whites. "Yo' dare play sich a trick as dat on me? I pay yo' fo' dat!"

Then lowering his head, Pomp made for his hector. Barney tried to dodge, but he was too late. Pomp's head took him in the stomach, and he literally sailed across the deck and came up in a banging heap against the steel netting. The breath was knocked out of him; but he gained his feet, and would have rushed again at Pomp, but Dr. Vaneyke interfered.

"Stop your fooling, you simpletons!" he cried, angrily. "Don't you know that this is no time for such work? Think of your master and his peril."

This sobered the two skylarkers at once. When they reflected that their beloved master, Frank Reade, Jr., was in fearful jeopardy, they could trifle no more. Both in a shamefaced manner skulked away, while Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder went on deck.

"Did you ever see or hear of anything so wonderful as this?" cried Snyder, as he gazed about him at the brilliant scene. "Why, it is like a vision of Paradise. I should think we were in a cave of diamonds."

"It is a wonderful work of nature," agreed the doctor.

"How do you account for it? You are a scientist and a student of such matters?" asked Snyder.

"It is a wonderful formation of crystals," declared Dr. Vaneyke. "I have never seen so magnificent a display before. These crystals are common in quartz formations. Truly, this cavern is one of the wonders of the world."

"How the crystals glitter in the glare of the electric light!"

"Yes, it is a beautiful sight. But practical matters now demand our attention."

"You are right."

"There is no doubt but that Frank Reade, Jr., was brought into this place by the outlaws. But, for aught we know, this cavern may extend miles underground. How shall we pursue them?"

This was a question not easily answered. The two men exchanged glances and were thoughtful for some while.

"Of course," the doctor finally continued, "we might attempt to proceed further with the Cyclone, but it would be with great risk of losing our way in this wonderful cavern. There is another way."

"What?"

"We can leave the Cyclone guarded by one man and go forward on foot."

"Even then we are apt to get lost."

"Yes, the situation is on all hands a dubious one."

Snyder was about to speak again when a startling thing happened to prevent. Suddenly from the depths of the cavern arches there came a thunderous roar.

Bullets by the score rattled harmlessly against the steel netting which shielded the deck. The outlaws had attacked the Cyclone again, and it began to look as if a terrible battle underground was to be waged.

Every man sprung to his post and prepared for defense.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WOUNDED OUTLAW.

POMP sprung to the search-light and swung it about, sending the piercing rays into every penetrable depth of the cavern. But not one of the outlaws could be seen.

They were concealed behind the crystal pillars, and at some depth in the cavern, which was the reason of this. Again they fired a volley at the Cyclone.

Of course the bullets could do no harm. But the defenders of the Cyclone could not return the fire for they could not see the outlaws.

At this juncture it occurred to Pomp to go forward with the Cyclone for some distance in the hopes of getting a better position. Accordingly he gave Barney the signal.

The Cyclone glided ahead and through the cavern arches. Pomp guided it skillfully,

while those on deck kept a sharp lookout and waited for a chance to use their rifles.

The chance came. Suddenly a number of the enemy were seen skurrying across an open space. Quick as a flash both Snyder and the doctor fired. Two of the outlaws at once dropped.

But the others vanished and the Cyclone was brought to a halt almost beside the outlaws who had fallen. It was seen that one of them was alive and making motions for mercy.

An idea struck Dr. Vaneyke.

"What do you think, Mr. Snyder?" he cried. "Why not take that poor wretch on board and force him to tell us all about the situation? We might learn all about this place in that way."

"All right!"

The doctor cried to Pomp to stop the Cyclone. But Pomp was already in the act of doing this.

None of the outlaws were in sight. They had evidently given up the fight and retreated.

The doctor opened the door in the steel netting and lowered the gang-ladder. Then, with Snyder, he sprang out, and lifting the wounded outlaw, carried him aboard the Cyclone.

He was almost a youth in years, with a not unhandsome face, and a manner which would not have betokened him an outlaw. His rescuers gazed at him with surprise.

"Upon my word," muttered the detective, "he is a fine-looking fellow, doctor."

"You are right," agreed Dr. Vaneyke, with a critical glance at their prisoner. "Let me see. Not so badly wounded. He is sure to live. A slight fracture of the thigh bone. Ah! I can fix that so he can go about on a crutch at once."

"I thank you, sir," said the wounded outlaw, in a deep, rich voice. "If I escape from this scrape alive I'll go back to St. Louis to my aged and sorrowing mother."

"Spoken like a man," cried Dr. Vaneyke. "Then you are not an outlaw from choice?"

"I can assure you I am not, sir. I was forced into the gang on threat of my life. I have long looked for an avenue of escape."

"What is your name?"

"Howard Walton."

"And you want to quit this life and get back to St. Louis to your mother?"

"That is my one great hope."

"Upon my soul you shall do it—upon one condition."

An eager light shone in Walton's eyes.

"What is that?"

"That you answer some questions which we may put to you."

"I will gladly do that," cried Walton, eagerly. "I don't care what it is. I will tell you the truth."

Duncan Snyder drew forth his note-book. Dr. Vaneyke began:

"Walton," he said, "how long have you been in Carlos Coleman's gang?"

"About one year."

"Ah, then you can give us our desired information. Did you know that Carlos kidnapped a little girl named Enid Weston from her home in Colville, Nebraska?"

"I know it well," replied the young outlaw, eagerly. "That young girl is now at this moment in this very cavern."

A gasping cry escaped Duncan Snyder's lips. He hastily jotted this down in his note-book, while Dr. Vaneyke went on:

"Tell us all about this cavern. Is it the stronghold of Carlos Coleman?"

"It is one of many," replied Walton. "But the girl is kept here. I know that well, for I have seen her."

"You have seen her?"

"Yes."

Snyder was much excited.

"Then you know where she is imprisoned?" he cried.

"I do, quite well."

"Where?"

"First," said Walton, steadily, "let me ask you a question. Who are you, and what is all this to you?"

With this Snyder proceeded to detail to Walton the object of their mission in No Man's Land.

He explained how Frank Reade, Jr., the wonderful young inventor, had been employed with his marvel, the Electric Cyclone, to track down Carlos Coleman.

Walton listened with the deepest of interest, then he looked curiously at him.

"This is the most wonderful invention I ever heard of," he declared. "And it is all run by electricity, eh? I can't believe it!"

"You have only to give us the proper cue whereby we may rescue Enid Weston and

Frank Reade, Jr., and you shall ride all the way to St. Louis in the Cyclone," declared Dr. Vaneyke. "Moreover, I will heal your wound for you."

"It is a bargain," cried Walton, joyfully. "First, I must tell you all about the peculiarities of this cavern."

"All right."

"Quite contrary to the usual case, it does not extend downward into the earth, but comes to a termination a few hundred yards beyond here, and a narrow passage winds upward to the summit of the butte."

"Indeed!"

"I might add that the butte is practically unscalable in any other way. The western side of it is a long and steep slope of smooth, unbroken ledge. There is not even a niche or a crevice in all its surface to help the would-be climber."

The doctor and Snyder listened in wonder.

"Of course, one could possibly climb that ascent, but he would be sure to be shot by the guard at the summit. The small passage is therefore the only safe way of reaching the top of the butte."

"It is a safe retreat," essayed Snyder.

"Yes, in more ways than one. The top of the butte is flat, with a smooth floor of stone. Around its edge Coleman has built a parapet of turf, from which saplings have grown up, so that the outlaws are concealed in their movements from any one on the plain below."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke. "But what do they do with their horses?"

"Oh, the upward passage will admit a horse," replied Walton. "But the Cyclone could not ascend."

"How long has Coleman had this stronghold here?"

"For many years. It is a good one, for one could track him here and thoroughly explore the cavern and not find the upward passage."

"Indeed!"

"For that reason, he has remained here long. He could hold an army at bay from the top of the butte."

"I should say so. But the little girl, Enid Weston—"

"Ah! she is confined in a small hut on the top of the butte. An armed guard is placed over her night and day."

"And Frank Reade, Jr.?" said Dr. Vaneyke.

"Will Coleman be likely to do him harm?"

"Do you mean the prisoner Carlos got at the Dobe Ranch?"

"Yes."

A startled gleam was in Walton's eyes.

"Gentlemen!" he cried, earnestly. "If you would save that man's life, you must lose no time. I heard Carlos give orders that he should be executed as soon as they reached the top of the butte. If you can do anything to save him, for God's sake lose no time!"

With an awful thrill of horror, Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder sprung to their feet.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

"FRANK READE, JR., must be saved!"

The forcible cry escaped the lips of Dr. Vaneyke. The detective Snyder seconded it. Both Barney and Pomp were drawn from their quarters by the announcement.

"Begorra, docther!" cried Barney, "only give me lave of absence an' I'll go out with me gun and save Misther Frank mesilf. Thim hay-thins shall niver kill him, if I can do annythin' to prevint."

"Hi dar!" cried Pomp, shaking his woolly head. "Jes' yo' lets dis chile git a chance to draw a line on dot ar outlaw Carlos. I spile his beauty, dat am a suttin' fac."

This was all right enough. But the stubborn fact yet confronted our friends that Frank Reade, Jr., was in the enemy's power, and there seemed no immediate or easy way of effecting his rescue.

But Snyder hit upon what seemed like the most feasible plan.

"I have got it," he cried. "You say your patient can go on crutches, doctor?"

"Yes," replied Vaneyke.

"Very well; let him accompany us in the dark and show us the opening to that secret passage that goes to the top of the butte. I'll risk but that we can in some way manage to sneak up there and perhaps rescue Frank."

"I'm with you," cried Dr. Vaneyke. "Will you do that for us, Walton?"

"Of course I will," replied the wounded outlaw, eagerly.

"That settles it," cried Snyder. "Shut off



the search-light, for we must have darkness to work in. Do you hear, Pomp?"

"Yas, sah!" cried the lump of ebony. "I done do jes as yo' says, boss. But can't dis chile go wid yo'?"

"Whurroo! it's yesilf as will be stayin' at home," cried Barney. "It's mesilf as will be ather goin', naygur."

"Jes yo' min' yo' own bizness, white trash. I'se done gwine to go dis time I tol' yo'," cried Pomp.

"Easy there!" cried Dr. Vaneyke, "or there won't either of you go. Pomp, you understand the working of the Cyclone best. You had better keep guard."

Barney turned a somersault of delight, while Pomp, crestfallen and disappointed, said nothing. Arrangements were quickly made for the expedition.

The search-light was turned off and the cavern enveloped in darkness. Just a faint glimmer of light marked the distant entrance.

After a long period of careful listening, and making sure that the coast was clear, Dr. Vaneyke led the way, and they all left the Cyclone, with the exception of Pomp, who remained behind to keep guard.

It was no easy matter to grope one's way through the darkness. The others would have gone astray had it not been for Walton.

He stole along quietly on his crutches, pausing every few moments to listen. Then he halted, and in a whisper said:

"We are at the end of the cavern. We are near the passage which leads to the top of the butte, and there is nobody on guard. We shall succeed."

"Good!" cried Dr. Vaneyke, in a hoarse undertone. "Show us the way, Walton, and we will be with you."

"As I am lame, and can be of little service, you had better go ahead without me."

"All right."

"I will show you the entrance to the passage."

"Pray do so."

"Wait here one moment and keep quiet, I will return."

As he said this Walton stepped across the cavern and leaned over an aperture in the rock wall. In the darkness the others heard his light movement and guessed what he was doing. He was listening at the foot of the shaft.

But the waiting explorers did not, nor did Walton himself dream of the tragic sequel so near at hand.

There was a sudden bright flash of light, a stunning report. Then a loud voice yelled:

"Hello! we are betrayed! Treachery! all hands down! Hello!"

Walton the next moment gasping reeled back into the arms of Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder:

"My God!" he gasped, "I am wounded badly. I fear I shall die!"

"Quick, boys!" cried Dr. Vaneyke, excitedly. "The game is up! We are betrayed. Back to the Cyclone."

Walton had fainted. It was not proposed to leave him to the mercy of the foe. Dr. Vaneyke lifted his feet and Barney and Snyder took his shoulders. In this manner they retreated as rapidly as possible toward the Cyclone.

The sound of pursuit could be heard. The foe were gaining upon them. Suddenly Dr. Vaneyke's strength gave out and he fell. Walton had regained consciousness and cried:

"I beg of you to leave me here. I am dying. Save yourselves."

But an idea had come to the heroic doctor. He again lifted Walton's feet.

"No, no," he cried. "We can outwit them. Here, quick, to the right."

Into a small niche in the cavern wall Dr. Vaneyke led his companions. Lights were flashing down the cavern and a few seconds later a score of outlaws went rushing past.

It was a clever dodge of the doctor's and enabled them to really give the outlaws the slip. But the affair had turned out very seriously for one of their party.

Poor Walton had really received his death wound. The bullet of his foe had penetrated the abdomen and he was rapidly sinking.

It was a sad moment, when all gathered about him, the doctor's small pocket lantern showing the shadow of death upon his handsome face.

"Well, friends," he said, with a weary smile. "My life has not turned out as I had once hoped that it would. I have never committed any crime of which I need feel guilty, which is one bit of satisfaction to me in my dying hour. But if you will do one favor for a dying man—

take—this message—to my mother—my dear, kind, patient, waiting mother in St. Louis—tell her that I am dead. Do not tell her that I died with the stain of outlaw upon me, but that my last thoughts were of her. That is all—it is growing darker—ah—"

That was all. In that last gasp the noble young spirit went out. There was an interval of secret silence. Had there been light enough to disclose the fact, it would have been seen that there was not a dry eye among the three survivors. Dr. Vaneyke reverently straightened the dead man's limbs.

Then he arose, and with an effort said chokingly:

"Poor fellow! it was too bad. But we have our own preservation to look out for now, friends. We must get back to the Cyclone somehow."

"Then let us lose no time," cried the detective. "Ah! I fear Frank Reade, Jr., has met with his death."

Dr. Vaneyke led the way through the cavern arches. In the distance ahead the faint glimmer of daylight at the entrance guided them. But to the surprise of all not a sign of the outlaws was visible.

The three men crept on slowly and cautiously. Every sound, no matter how slight, called a halt, nor was an advance made until it was satisfactorily explained.

In this way they slowly made their way along. At length Dr. Vaneyke came to a halt.

"That is queer," he muttered. "This ought to be the very spot where we left the Cyclone."

To all belief they were in the big cavern chamber of crystal where the Cyclone was left. But the electric machine was not there. What did it mean?

A fearful chill of apprehension seized Dr. Vaneyke. He said nothing, but continued on. They were now almost at the mouth of the cavern and could see the pass beyond. Dr. Vaneyke drew a deep breath.

"Boys!" he ejaculated. "I fear we are in heaps of trouble. Something has certainly happened to Pomp while we have been gone."

However this was, the Cyclone certainly had mysteriously taken its departure. The very worst of apprehensions were hereby aroused.

## CHAPTER X.

### FRANK READE, JR.'S ADVENTURES.

BUT what of Frank Reade, Jr., the world famous inventor? Certainly his position was one of a terrible sort, and his adventures in the hands of the outlaws well worth recording.

We have seen him taken into the outlaws' stronghold. The summit of the butte, the stronghold, was exactly as described by Walton.

It was a broad and level surface, several hundred feet in extent. In one part there were several cabins made of stone and adobe bricks.

Into one of these cabins Frank Reade, Jr., was led. An armed guard was placed at the door.

Here he was left for some while. He knew nothing of what was going on outside, but he realized fully the imminent peril of his position.

There were two windows to his adobe cabin. One of these looked almost directly into a window in a cabin next to it, and which was but a few feet distant.

Out of curiosity Frank Reade, Jr., went up to this and gazed through the window beyond. As chance had it, a face appeared in the window.

The young inventor was electrified. It was the sweet, beautiful face of a young girl, almost a child in years, who gazed at him in a startled kind of way.

A sort of divination explained matters to Frank. Without doubt this child-faced young girl was Enid Weston. Satisfied of this the young inventor made an eager motion just as the girl prisoner was about to shrink away.

"Wait! Do not go," he said, in an undertone. "Are you not Enid Weston?"

A swift light of eager joy and part comprehension flashed across her face.

"Oh!" she cried, excitedly. "You have come to rescue me. Yes, I am Enid Weston. My prayers are answered."

"Yes, Enid," replied the young inventor. "I am certainly in this country to rescue you. But, unfortunately, I am like yourself, just now a prisoner."

"Then you can tell me of my sister—of Madge," she cried, eagerly.

"I can and will," replied Frank.

With this he was proceeding to give her an

explanation of all events since the hour she was kidnapped, when the guard chanced to hear their voices.

This ended the colloquy for the guard entered and caused a blind to be placed over the window. A moment later a file of men entered the room.

"We want you," said the foremost. "Make your peace, for you are going to your death. It is the chief's orders to measure off fifty paces and shoot you."

Frank Reade, Jr., felt a sickening sense of despair. But his features did not show it. They were iron-like in their mobility.

"I am ready!" was all he said.

He was led out of the cabin by the file of men. Carlos Coleman himself stood near, and barely deigned to look at the prisoner as he passed.

Frank Reade, Jr., was led to a spot near the edge of the long slope, which extended down that side of the butte over smooth rock. He noted this as he prepared himself for that ordeal, which might well make the stoutest heart sink.

He was face to face with death. Fifty paces distant the outlaws were drawn up in line with their Winchesters covering him.

Frank's hands were tied behind him. But from the first he had kept steadily at work trying to loosen them. Now they were beginning to yield. The lieutenant of the file had begun his order to fire.

"Ready! Aim!"

"One—two—"

That was all. Frank Reade, Jr., in that instant freed his hands and accepted a bold chance for life.

Swift as a flash he made a backward leap, and went over the edge of the butte. The rifles blended in a stunning report, but the bullets were wasted.

All rushed to the edge of the long slide.

Frank Reade, Jr., went down that declivity with the speed of a race horse. But, strange to say, when he reached the soft prairie below a few seconds later, he was unhurt.

He got upon his feet a little dizzy, but unharmed. He knew the value of haste at dashed away on the run. But at that moment, as chance had it, four outlaws came around an angle in the hill.

Those on the height above shouted to them and they at once gave chase. Frank Reade, Jr., would certainly have been captured, but at that moment a horse and rider sprang out of a clump of trees near, and a rifle shot rang out upon the air.

One of the outlaws dropped. Again the rifle spoke. The others came to a halt. Fearing that a larger force was at hand they beat a retreat.

There was no time to lose. The horseman spurred up to Frank's side.

"Quick, for your life!" he cried. "Jump up behind me!"

The young inventor needed no second invitation. He instantly sprang upon the horse's back, at the same time exclaiming:

"This is the second time you have saved my life, Arthur Wallis. How did you get here?"

It was indeed the daring young man who had saved Frank's life at the time of the dynamite explosion in Readestown, when the attempt was made to blow up the Cyclone.

The horse bestrode by Arthur Wallis with long leaps left danger behind. In a short while Wallis pulled up the horse and said:

"We are safe. Let us get down."

Frank was glad to do this.

"I owe you my life," he said. "How can I repay you?"

"I want no pay," replied Wallis. "But how is it that I find you in this strait? Where is the Electric Cyclone?"

Frank told his story simply and graphically. Wallis listened without comment until Frank told of his meeting with Enid Weston, when he sprang up and cried, excitedly:

"My God! Do you mean to tell me that the robber's stronghold is up there and that Enid is so near us?"

"I do," replied Frank, surprised at the other's manner. "Are you, then, also interested in the rescue of Enid Weston?"

"Interested!" exclaimed Wallis, in a changed voice. "I should say that I was."

Frank Reade, Jr., could not help but notice the change of voice. Then another startling thing happened. The horse, by whose bridle Wallis stood, suddenly plunged. The movement dislodged the latter's sombrero.

Off it came and to Frank's astonishment, a red wig with it. Down over Wallis's shoulders



fell a wealth of golden hair. In an instant a cry of recognition escaped Frank's lips:

"As I live! What surprise is this? Arthur Wallis—no—Madge Weston!"

Pale and trembling, but resolute, the daring young girl stood before Frank. Her disguise had been good and she had played her part well only to be betrayed by the simplest of mishaps.

"Yes. You may wonder at my daring," she said simply. "But I can tell you it is the outcome of desperation. I am determined to rescue my sister or die."

"You are reckless to dare so much," said Frank, reprovingly.

"Perhaps so, but I know I need not ask you not to betray me."

Frank Reade, Jr., advanced and held out his hand.

"Madge," he said, kindly, "you are a brave girl. But it is neither wise nor safe for you to masquerade thus. Let us compromise. Disguard your disguise, become yourself once more, and you shall remain aboard the Cyclone until Enid is rescued."

The daring girl hesitated.

"But where is the Cyclone?" she asked.

"It is in quest of me," replied Frank. "We shall find it all right. Ah! what is that?"

Both turned to behold a thrilling sight. Across the prairie the Cyclone was seen dashing at a tremendous rate of speed. To its sides clung a number of the outlaws, who were vainly trying to break their way through the steel netting.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A WONDERFUL FEAT.

POMP was visible in the pilot-house guiding the Cyclone in its course. The truth was the outlaws had attacked the Cyclone in the cavern, and the frightened ducky decided that the only way to save the machine was to pull up stakes and cut out of the cavern.

This he had done, and thus is furnished a very simple explanation of the mysterious disappearance of the Cyclone, which so puzzled Dr. Vaneyke and the others.

Frank Reade, Jr., caught onto the situation at once. He jumped up and waved his arms, shouting excitedly.

Pomp saw him, and the effect upon the terrified ducky was electrical. In an instant he turned the Cyclone in Frank's direction, slowing speed.

Frank seized Madge's rifle and began to pick off the enemy. The outlaws, seeing two men, as they supposed, and not knowing how much larger force might be at hand, began to leap from the Cyclone's deck and run.

In a few moments not one was left, and the Cyclone was brought to a stop but a few feet away. Pomp, excited beyond all measure, rushed out of the pilot-house.

"For de good Lor', Marse Frank," he cried, wildly, "dis am de funniest ting yet. I jes' happened along here lucky, didn't I? Lucky fo' you, an' lucky fo' me, fo' as suah as I see a libe nigger, dem hyenas would have busted dere way into de Cyclone. It's good fo' sore eyes to see yo' once mo' free. How eber did yo' escape from dem rapscallions, anyhow?"

Pomp's eyes were as big as saucers. Frank laughed and made reply:

"Well, to tell the truth, Pomp, it was a close call for me. I only escaped by just a pinch. Do you see that steep side of the butte?"

"I does, Marse Frank."

"Well, I slid down that, and escaped with a broken neck."

Pomp gaped in amazement at this seemingly incredible feat. He scratched his woolly head.

"I done tink yo' have mo' lives dan a cat, Marse Frank. I jes gib yo' up fo' dead."

"Not much," laughed Frank. "Do you know this young lady, Pomp, who has been so daring as to don male attire?"

Pomp stared at Madge.

"Dat young man wid de long hair?" he said.

"Nebber seed him afore, Marse Frank."

"But you are mistaken, Pomp," cried the young inventor. "Don't you recognize her?"

Madge indulged in a silvery laugh, and exclaimed:

"I don't blame you, Pomp, for not knowing me. But fortunately I have some female attire with me, and I will don it as soon as I get aboard."

Pomp rubbed his eyes again.

"Bress ma haht!" he gasped. "Am it Miss Madge Weston? Whatever brought yo' out here to dis yere place, honey?"

Madge briefly explained matters, and then all went on board. For the first time Frank

noticed the deserted air about the Cyclone, and cried:

"Why, Pomp, where are the others? Not asleep, I hope."

"Lor' bress yo', Marse Frank, dey am in de cave," cried Pomp.

"In the cave?"

"Dat am a fac'."

"Well, explain please. How does it happen that you with the Cyclone are out here when the others are in the cavern?"

"Jes' listen to me one moment, Marse Frank," cried the frustrated ducky. "I didn't run off an' leave dem for fear ob de outlaws, sah, 'deed I didn't. I was done afraid de rapscallions would capture de Cyclone, dat I was, being as I was de only man on board, so I jest cut out an' run."

"And left the others in the cavern?"

"Yes, sah! Hab I done wrong?"

"I can't say as yet!" cried Frank, excitedly.

"But take the wheel. I'll start the dynamos, and let us get back to the cavern as quickly as Heaven will let us. For all we know they may all be slaughtered before this."

Pomp nearly fell over himself in his haste to reach the pilot-house. It is needless to say that he had the Cyclone up to the points of the compass in quick order.

But just then an idea struck Frank Reade, Jr. It was a novel and a daring one.

"Hold on, Pomp!" he cried.

"Yas, sah!"

Frank gave a quick and critical glance at the butte. Then he said:

"Come and help me put on the rubber tires on the wheels, Pomp."

The ducky's eyes bulged out.

"Why, Marse Frank!" he cried. "Dere am no steep rocks to run over."

"Aren't there, eh?" cried the young inventor.

"Do you see that smooth side of the butte. The side I took my slide over I mean. Well, it seems almost perpendicular, don't it? I mean to show you how the Cyclone can climb."

Pomp's teeth chattered wildly.

"Fo' Hebbin's sake, Marse Frank, yo' ain't mad. Yo' don't mean to try to climb dat ar' steep place?"

"Yes, I do."

"Lor' bress dis nig. De Cyclone done fall back an' git busted."

"Not much," cried Frank, resolutely. "The rubber tires will enable the wheels to cling to the rock. I have electric force enough to drive twenty Cyclones up that height. It will place us right in the heart of the robber's stronghold and we can literally clean them out with the electric gun—"

"And rescue Enid!" cried Madge.

"Yes."

Madge had now come on deck prettily attired in a tasty dress which she had carried in a bundle at her saddle bow. Now that it was decided that she should remain aboard the Cyclone, she had turned her horse free, and he cantered away across the prairie.

To an outsider, Frank's proposal to climb the butte with the Electric Cyclone was a rash one. But he knew the power of his machine well. Madge clapped her hands with delight, and Pomp scratched his head dubiously.

"Of co'se, Marse Frank, if yo' really mean it."

"Are you afraid, Pomp?" cried Frank, sharply. "If you are, you can wait down here on the prairie. I don't imagine Barney would be afraid for a moment."

That clenched the argument. Pomp's bosom swelled and his eyes rolled.

"Sho' dar, Marse Frank," he snorted. "I've never been outdone yit by dat l'ishman, an' I nebber will. If yo' say run de Cyclone to de moon, up she goes, an' me wid her."

With a quick move Pomp shut off the current and brought the Cyclone to a stop. They were near the base of the butte, but just out of rifle shot.

However, upon the summit of the butte, in the fringe of trees, a line of the outlaws could be seen. They fired ineffectual shots at the Cyclone at intervals.

Frank Reade, Jr., hastily, with Pomp's help, proceeded to adjust the rubber tires upon the Cyclone's wheels. All the while the outlaws watched the operation with great interest, never dreaming of the real purpose of their foe.

In due course of time the operation was concluded, and all was announced in readiness. The Cyclone was headed toward the steep ascent, and the full force of the dynamos put to work.

The result was surprising—the Cyclone advanced straight up the incline. The rubber tires

kept the wheels from slipping, and the Cyclone literally walked up the steep side of the butte. The effect upon the outlaws was intense. A wild yell escaped their lips. Several of them raised their rifles, and a volley was given the Cyclone.

Of course the bullets rattled off the steel sides of the Cyclone harmlessly. Frank shouted to Pomp to hold the wheel steady, and then ran into the gun-room in the bow.

It was but a moment's work to insert a bomb in the electric gun. He sighted it, and pulled the electric wire up to the push-button which connected it with the current.

The connection was made and, on the instant, the gun, with a vivid lightning-flash, exploded. The effect was terrific, and grand in the extreme.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE APACHES.

THE explosion of the electric gun blew a number of the trees up by their roots, killed several of the outlaws, and plowed a perfect ravine through the pile of grass-grown earth, which formed the rampart around the top of the butte.

It was like a bolt from the clouds, and the air for a few seconds was full of flying debris.

In face of such a mighty destroyer no human force could stand. The outlaws were reckless men, but even Black Carlos himself was awed by this terrific exhibition of the Cyclone's power.

And up and into their very stronghold that dread machine of death was coming. To remain and attempt to fight would be suicidal. A panic seized the outlaws.

Black Carlos did not seek to restrain them. He rushed to the cabin in which Enid was confined.

With the help of one of his men he dragged her forth. Every outlaw in the band was getting into saddle. Coleman's horse had been brought forth, and he mounted it, with Enid before him in the saddle.

One unfortunate incident favored the outlaws.

The Cyclone had reached the small cut in the turf made by the dynamite. Pomp had endeavored to use this as an avenue of entrance into the stronghold.

But the earth was soft, and one of the wheels got temporarily wedged between two small boulders. This made a brief delay, but was nevertheless sufficient time to allow the outlaws to escape.

When the Cyclone was freed and glided onto the smooth floor of the butte's summit, the stronghold was found deserted. Frank Reade, Jr.'s disappointment was extreme.

"Well, that beats me!" he cried, in vexation. "They've given us the slip. How in the mischief did they do it?"

The truth was the outlaws had simply descended into the crystal cavern by means of the downward passage, and were now far out on the prairie seeking safety in new quarters. It required but little further research for Frank Reade, Jr., to discover this fact.

Instantly he sprang aboard the Cyclone and gave Pomp orders to make ready for a descent from their elevated position. This was a ticklish and dangerous task, but by keeping the dynamos at full force and allowing the Cyclone to drop gradually a few feet at a time, going down backwards, the descent was safely made.

The rubber tires were removed and the Cyclone sped away upon a new tack. Around the base of the butte it went, until the entrance to the narrow pass which terminated in the crystal cavern was reached.

Then the Cyclone shot through this and into the cavern. The search-light was turned on and the place illuminated.

But it was deserted. The outlaws had fled from it as well as our friends Dr. Vaneyke, Barney and Snyder, the detective. Frank Reade, Jr., satisfied himself of this and then let the Cyclone run out again onto the prairie.

"They have outwitted us," he declared, disappointedly. "But I will not give up. I shall follow Carlos Coleman to the ends of the earth. But first we must find Dr. Vaneyke and the others if they are alive."

At this moment an excited cry escaped Pomp's lips.

"Lor' sabe us, Marse Frank! Dar dey are now alibe and well."

There was no disputing this declaration. Over a distant knoll three men had appeared in view. Even at that distance they were



easily recognized as Dr. Vaneyke and Barney and Detective Duncan Snyder.

They waved their arms excitedly and joyfully at sight of the Cyclone. Pomp needed no bidding but started the machine in their direction.

In a few moments the trio were clambering aboard the Cyclone. They were overjoyed to meet Frank safe and well, and a mutual interchange of experiences followed.

Pomp and Barney regaled each other with Munchausen tales of their separate experiences, and it was difficult to decide which could elaborate the biggest lie on the subject.

"Begorra, three av the biggest av the bloody outlaws descended upon me at once," cried Barney, positively. "I jist made out to run away from them and then scrouched down and let the fust fall over me back. Be jabbers, it broke his neck. The second wan I give a boost in the jaw with me fist an' the lasht I seen av him he was turning somersaults towards the setting sun. The third wan I caught by the scruff av the neck an' give him a hoist with me fut. He went up twenty feet in the air, an' whin he fell he drew his head two feet in the airth. If ye don't belave it, I'll show ye where he's sthickin' up in the ground yit loike a darnin' needl. That's thrue!"

"Golly dat ain't anything!" sniffed Pomp. "Yo' oughter hev seen dis yer chile. Jes' as I was comin' out of de cavern jes a hundred of dem ugly outlaws jumped abo' de Cyclone. Dey done bruk into de cabin an' tacked dis chile fo' all he was wuff. Kil yit! I jist grabbed one ob dem up by de boot-legs an' lammed at de oders so hard like, dat I druv dis man's body right troo three ob dem! Yo' had oughter seed de oder outlaws run. I jes' yelled look out fo' Samson, an' dey done skipped out ob dat cabin so quick dat free ob dem dislocated deir spines. Dat am a fac'."

Pomp ducked his head just in time. Barney had fired a bootjack at him and grabbed a pail of water near. Souze went the water over the darky's person, and then both went at it tooth and nail. Only the sudden appearance of Frank Reade, Jr., put an end to the squabble.

A conference had been held and it was decided to try and find the trail of the outlaws.

Madge, while in her disguise of Arthur Wallis, had learned that the butte and the crystal cavern was only one of many strongholds that Black Carlos had.

The one to which he had now gone, she fancied, was upon an island in the Black Canyon of a branch of the Canadian river. To find their way thither would be something of a problem, but it was decided to attempt the feat.

Accordingly search was made for the trail of the fleeing outlaws. Marks of the horses' hoofs were found and followed for some ways.

But as progress in this manner was deemed too slow it was decided to go ahead more rapidly and trust to chance for keeping the right direction. More speed was put upon the Cyclone and they sped across the prairies.

All that day they ran at full speed. It seemed as if they should have come up with the outlaws by this time. But yet nothing of them was seen.

Just in their path at nightfall was a clump of timber. In the verge of this Frank Reade, Jr., brought the Cyclone to a halt.

They were out of water and as it looked likely that there was plenty of this to be had in the timber, Barney and Snyder volunteered to go in quest of some.

Madge desired to accompany them. Accordingly all three set out with receptacles to look for a spring.

Frank Reade, Jr., was busy studying up some maps of the country. Pomp was oiling the bearings of the Cyclone, and Dr. Vaneyke was studying some specimens of the flora of the region which he designed for his cabinet.

"What yo' tink, Marse Frank?" asked Pomp. "Will we eber rescue dat young girl dat we am affah?"

"I hope so, Pomp," replied the young inventor.

"I done tink we hab a hard job ob it. But yo' neber got left yit, Marse Frank. I reckon yo'll succeed yet."

"I think we will, Pomp," replied Frank, folding up his maps. "Ah! what is that?"

A wild chorus of fiendish yells broke upon the air. Frank saw a thrilling scene at that moment.

The yells came from a troop of war painted Apache savages, who came riding at mad speed around the edge of the timber. Between the timber and the Cyclone, Barney, Snyder and Madge could be seen running for their lives.

It was, undoubtedly, the purpose of the sav-

ages to cut off the fugitives and kill and scalp them.

"It was a critical moment and the savages seemed likely to succeed. Something must be done at once."

#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### A FIGHT WITH APACHES.

FRANK READE, JR., saw this at a glance. The Apaches were likely to cut off the three fugitives unless action was quickly made to prevent.

Snyder and Barney were assisting Madge. Barney fired a shot at the savages. All on board the Cyclone now were aroused. Quick action was what was needed.

One of the savages threw up his arms and tumbled from his horse, for Barney was a dead shot.

"Bad cess to the varmints!" he cried, as he threw a new cartridge into the breech. "Do ye go ahead with the ledly, misther, an' I'll thry and hold the omadhouns back."

Crack! once again Barney's rifle spoke. But this did not check the red demons, who came on like a troop of fiends incarnate, yelling and brandishing their weapons and evidently intent on cutting off the fugitives.

But Frank Reade, Jr., had no idea of permitting them to do this.

He had sprung at once to the electric gun. It was but a moment's work to train it upon the savages.

There was a tremendous explosion, forks of lightning seemed to fill the air, and a path was literally hewed through the body of horsemen in a twinkling.

A jumbled up mass of horses and savages were heaped upon the prairie. The ponies of the survivors shied in terror, and broke away in another direction. The next moment Pomp and Dr. Vaneyke were helping the fugitives on board the Cyclone.

Once on deck and the steel door closed, our adventurers were safe enough, and could view the red foe with impunity through the steel netting.

The Indians had split ranks, and circling about again, came to the attack from the rear.

They were incited to attack by a tall, powerful built savage. He was the personification of bravery, and led his warriors with the valor of a Murat.

Pomp and Barney, with Snyder and Vaneyke, were at the loopholes with their Winchesters.

The four of them formed quite a battery, and as the savages came within range the four rifles spoke. Every shot fetched a savage. Yet the tall chief seemed to bear a charmed life, and came on furiously.

The next moment the whole gang were upon the Cyclone. Arrows and lances rattled harmlessly against the steel sides of the Cyclone. Frank Reade, Jr., had charged the steel hull with the full power of the dynamo, and the effect was wonderful and laughable in the extreme.

The savages desperately spurred their ponies to close quarters with the Cyclone.

But the moment a pony or rider touched the heavily charged steel, he was picked up and hurled yards away, as if by a giant hand.

Indians and horses were flying right and left. The defenders of the Cyclone, at short range, poured volley after volley with destructive effect into the struggling mass of savages.

In vain the tall chief urged them on. The electric force prevented their climbing aboard the Cyclone, and beneath the raking fire of the Winchesters, they were obliged to retreat in great disorder.

The ground was literally strewn with dead Indians and ponies. The Apaches had found in the Cyclone a foe well worthy of their steel.

These nomadic warriors, the terror of the herdsmen and the emigrant, and generally invincible against an even force, were completely demoralized by their experience with the Cyclone.

The mysterious electric force which hurled them away from it at every attempt to clamber aboard was something beyond their limited intellect to comprehend.

The strange-looking "wagon" was certainly very bad medicine. At least this must have been the result of the conference held by them out on the prairie, for suddenly, with a chorus of maddened, discomfited yells, they wheeled their ponies and galloped madly out of sight.

"That is the last of them," declared Dr. Vaneyke. "They didn't do much harm, did they, Frank?"

"Not the least that I can see," replied the

young inventor, as he now came out on the deck. At this moment a laughable incident occurred.

Now that the strife was over, the irrepressible Barney must needs have a fling at Pomp. The latter individual was standing at a loophole in the netting, looking after the retreating savages, when Barney suddenly picked up a wet swab which had been used in scouring the brass work, and dashed it at him.

The swab took Pomp in the back of the neck, and was such a surprise that for a moment the darky thought his neck was broken.

A yell of agony escaped his lips, and he turned in time to see Barney's convulsed mug. The Celt could not keep his mug straight.

"Fo' de good Lor's sake!" gasped Pomp. "Was dat yo', sah, what fired dat nasty t'ing at me? Huh, dar! I jes' break yo' back fo' dat, yo' dirty lish mucker, yo'!"

"Begorra, yez'll have to catch me fust," cried Barney, tantalizingly.

"Dat's jes' what I se gwine fo' to do," cried Pomp, making a dash for Barney. "When I does, may de good Lor' help youse!"

Barney, in retreat, flung open the door of the netting.

He sprang out on the forward part of the Cyclone's hull.

And now the laughable incident came in.

The jolly roysterer was picked up and flung from the Cyclone's hull like a puff-ball. He struck, however, upon the hard surface of the prairie with considerable more force.

Frank Reade, Jr., had not yet discharged the steel hull of electricity, and Barney, forgetting this, got the full force of the dynamo.

He saw stars with the force of the shock, and for several moments did not want to get up.

This was rich meat for Pomp, who held his sides and roared with laughter. It was so funny that everybody laughed immoderately.

Barney came on board sheepishly. He did not attempt retaliation, but crept away with no inclination further than skylarking that day.

Frank discharged the hull of electricity now, and once more the Cyclone started on its way. Night was coming on, but the young inventor had decided not to stop anywhere again until he had overtaken the outlaws, if such a thing was possible.

It was not difficult to travel across the prairie with the search-light to illuminate the way.

Frank set his course just as one would on ship-board, and the Cyclone did not abate its speed although the darkness soon became intense.

But before the horizon was shut from view, a distant range of hills was seen. Toward these the young inventor steered the Cyclone.

While Pomp handled the wheel, Frank Reade, Jr., went forward of the pilot-house with a night-glass and tried hard to locate the distant hills.

He made the distance something more than forty miles. This would, considering the nature of the ground, make it near morning before the Cyclone could reach the hills.

On across the prairie the Cyclone ran with great speed.

But there were many rough sections where speed had to be abated, and broad lakes of water about which a detour had to be made. This consumed extra time.

Thus far nothing had been seen of the outlaws. For hours the Cyclone had run on unhindered.

It was in the morning hours, and Barney was turning out for the last watch, when a great cry came from Pomp in the pilot-house.

He pressed an electric button, which set an alarm gong to ringing.

At the same moment the Cyclone came to a jarring, jolting halt. It was a thrilling surprise and brought everybody up from below to see what was the matter.

At first nothing was revealed by the search-light. But a series of demoniac yells from the darkness, and a volley of rifle balls soon apprised all that great danger threatened.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### INTO THE HILLS.

"WHAT did you stop the Cyclone for?" cried Frank Reade, Jr., as he rushed into the pilot-house where Pomp was.

"Golly, Marse Frank," cried the darky steersman. "I didn't stop it. It done stop itself."

Frank glanced at the electric indicator and saw it twitching and jumping strangely. He was mystified.



"That's queer," he muttered.

Then he examined the insulators and the push button. There was nothing to divert the current and it was on full force.

The tottering motion of the machine now explained the situation to the young inventor. He turned a small crank, which brought the search-light about so that its rays fell athwart the wheels.

They were clogged.

The clever trick of the foe was seen at a glance. A number of tough, strong nets had been drawn across the Cyclone's path.

At first they had offered no resistance to the machine, but before it had gone far, the strong twines winding scores of times over the axles and wheels, had clogged them and stopped the Cyclone. The wheels could not revolve.

The force of the current finding resistance was diverted into the steel bearings and was fast drawing them to a white heat.

It was a moment of great danger. The intense heat would swell the axles and destroy their temper. The Cyclone was in a fair way to be ruined.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was equal to the occasion.

With a quick leap he reached the stairway and went down into the engine room. It was but a moment's work to shut off the current and in turn charge the steel hull of the Cyclone.

A perfect understanding of the situation was now uppermost in Frank's mind.

This was a sharp trick of the outlaws. It was yet their belief that by clogging the wheels of the Cyclone and making a desperate attack they could capture it and its occupants.

"We will show them," muttered Frank. "I don't believe they will ever want to meddle with the Electric Cyclone again."

Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder were now on deck with their Winchesters.

Rifle bullets were flying thick and fast against the steel netting which protected the Cyclone's deck.

It was quite impossible to locate the outlaws in the darkness, until Frank came up and arranged the search-light so that its rays could sweep in all directions.

Then the outlaws were revealed dismounted and standing behind their horses. The defenders of the Cyclone fired a volley at them.

This was returned but did no damage. As the Cyclone could not be freed from the nets for some time, all procured Winchesters and returned the fire at the foe.

It did not take Carlos Coleman's gang long to discover that their shots were futile. They could not penetrate the steel netting, while the bullets from the Cyclone killed half a dozen of their men.

With this realization their ugly temper was at once aroused. With characteristic desperation a charge was made.

Frank Reade, Jr. knew that it would be impossible for the outlaws to come aboard of the Cyclone, so he felt no fear of the result.

On came the desperate gang with wild shouts. They reached the rail of the Cyclone with little trouble. But the next moment they were recoiling backward by dozens, turning back some, as if kicked by a mule. Not a man succeeded in climbing aboard.

While Frank Reade, Jr., coolly directed the firing, even Madge took a rifle and joined the ranks.

The outlaws tumbled to the racket a little more quickly than the Apaches had. They understood that the Cyclone's hull was charged with electric fluid, and that it was impossible to board her.

Realizing this they beat a hasty retreat. Not until they were at a safe distance out upon the prairie did they give expression to their baffled rage.

Then they made the air hideous with their fierce yells of defiance and derision.

They, however, kept safely beyond the scope of the search-light. It was their fancy that with the coming of daylight, some plan could be arranged to insure the destruction of the Cyclone.

But Frank Reade, Jr., had no idea of permitting the Cyclone to remain in its present helpless condition.

In the darkness Barney and Pomp descended from the deck and began to remove the netting. With sharp knives they cut it away and soon had cleared the tangled mass away.

Then they cautiously crept forward and removed another net just a short distance ahead.

By the time this was accomplished the gray light of dawn had begun to illumine the east.

Frank Reade, Jr., gave orders for the Cyclone to go ahead.

The hills were now quite near at hand. In some way the outlaws had seemed to have got an inkling of the state of affairs, for they were seen far in the distance beating a safe retreat into the hills.

They were galloping their horses madly. The Cyclone started in pursuit, but the desperadoes gained the high ground in time to vanish in a deep pass.

Into this the Cyclone ran, but it became necessary to go slowly, for the way was blocked with large boulders.

But the Cyclone managed to pick its way along until the pass ended in a lovely little valley in the very heart of the mountain ranges.

Here a halt was called. It was not easy to guess the condition taken by the outlaws now.

This was then the region in which the second stronghold of Black Carlos was located. That it was a more secure one than the other did not seem probable. Yet Frank Reade, Jr., proceeded with due caution.

The young inventor with Barney got out and proceeded to do some prospecting. This resulted in the discovery of a trail, which seemed to lead across the valley.

That it had been made by the outlaws seemed almost a certainty. To follow it was the next move.

In their prospecting tour Barney and Frank had walked some distance from the Cyclone around the edge of a strip of timber. They had been so absorbed in following the trail, that they did not stop to consider the distance covered until it came time to return.

Then they suddenly became aware of the proximity of a deadly peril which had come upon them all unawares. Barney was the first to become cognizant of it.

A sharp, startled cry suddenly escaped the Celt's lips.

"Begorra, Misther Frank, we're in for it an' divil a bit of a mistake. Wud yez look at the loikes av that."

The young inventor gazed in the direction indicated by Barney, and experienced a startled thrill. There was good reason for fear.

From a clump of brushwood, not two hundred yards distant, a score of painted savages on foot had emerged, and had cut off their retreat to the Cyclone. That they were Apaches Frank saw at a glance.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, examining the breech of his rifle. "That looks tough, Barney. We have made fools of ourselves!"

"Begorra, I agree wid yez, Misther Frank!" cried Barney, excitedly.

"We shall be lucky to get out of this scrape with our scalps!"

"Troth, an' that's a fact, sorr!"

For one swift moment Frank Reade, Jr., was undecided what to do. A volley of arrows which came dangerously hissing about them caused him to act quickly.

"Back into the timber, Barney!" he cried, excitedly. "We must not expose ourselves here! Quick, for your life!"

They sought the security of the timber belt just in time. But the crisis was at hand, for the savages came on with wild yells.

## CHAPTER XV.

### A WONDERFUL ISLAND.

FRANK READE, JR., opened fire on the advancing foe and Barney followed suit. The Winchesters were deadly at that range, and four of the savages being quickly dropped in their tracks, it checked the advance of the others.

With customary cowardice they retreated and sought hiding places in the deep grass.

The Indian is nothing if not strategic, and as the case stood now, they had decidedly the best of it.

Neither Frank nor Barney could move from the woods for fear of being struck down with the arrows of the Apaches.

The situation was critical, and it is hard to say how it might have ended, had it not been for the fact that deliverance was close at hand.

Those on board the Cyclone had heard the distant shots.

It did not take them long to guess what was the matter, and Pomp with a glass managed to distinguish the distant forms of the savages.

Instant action was made for the succor of the beleaguered ones.

"Marse Frank an' dat Fishman am done got into trouble!" cried Pomp, excitedly. "We's jest got to go to dere relief at once. Eberybody look out fo' de Injuns now."

Pomp started the Cyclone in the direction of the scene of action. In a few moments, it was speeding to the rescue. At sight of it the savages, with wild yells, fled. A few shots were bestowed upon them, and then Frank Reade Jr., and Barney rushed out of their place of security, and came aboard.

It was not deemed advisable to follow the savages. The outlaws' trail was the next object, and this was slowly traced across the valley.

This brought the pursuers to a mighty canyon, with walls a thousand feet high in places. For grandeur and depth it had no rival, not even in the region of the famous Rio Grande.

All stood and gazed upon this mighty marvel of nature, in wonder. Dr. Vaneyke was in ecstasies, for he saw a good chance to gather mineralogical treasures for his cabinet at home.

"Dat am a drefful deep cut in de ground!" commented Pomp.

"Begorra, I should say that same, naygur!" agreed Barney.

"What a beautiful spectacle!" said Madge Weston, with admiration. "Truly the wonders of nature are not half discovered yet."

The detective Snyder was of too prosaic a turn to make comment. He was busily considering the feasibility of a stronghold in the canyon.

But one thing was to be regretted. The bed of the canyon, which no doubt at certain seasons of the year was a swollen torrent, seemed too rough with boulders and jagged stones to allow of the passage of the Cyclone through it.

If it was invaded, our adventurers must go forward on foot. This was a dampening realization, for of course it involved no little risk.

A council of war was at once held. There was no doubt but that the canyon led to the outlaws' retreat, for here the trail terminated.

The result was, it was decided that Barney and Pomp should this time accompany Frank Reade, Jr., some distance up the canyon on foot.

Of course Duncan Snyder felt somewhat disappointed, but finally yielded with good grace.

So with Madge and Dr. Vaneyke the detective remained on board the Cyclone. Frank's reasons for taking his two trusty employees were good ones, and based upon excellent judgment. Barney and Pomp had accompanied him in many thrilling expeditions, and he knew that both were able fighters and skilled strategists.

It was a risky undertaking to invade the canyon in this way, and Frank felt that he wanted men of experience with him. This was, however, without casting any reflection upon Snyder. As for Dr. Vaneyke, the genial scientist did not aspire to a fighting reputation.

Both Barney and Pomp knew that the expedition was a hazardous one, else Frank would not have selected them both to accompany him. Accordingly, they relinquished skylarking for a time, and attended strictly to business and duty.

Armed with repeating rifles, the reconnoitering party of three left the Cyclone.

The directions given by Frank were, that the Cyclone should remain where it was until their return. If attacked, Dr. Vaneyke knew how to work the dynamos and use the electric gun.

Frank led the way into the canyon. As they penetrated now deeper into its recesses, all were impressed with its mighty depth and grandeur.

Far above, the stars in the firmament could be seen twinkling, as if one was looking upward from the bottom of a deep well. So high were the frowning walls that a gloom like that of early evening pervaded the canyon.

No signs of the outlaws were seen and the three reconnoiterers kept on, not without caution, however.

"Begorra, this might be the entrance to Purgatory for all we know," cried Barney, with sudden inspiration. "If I was shure av that same, divil a bit further wud I go. Whurroo!"

"Why not interview his Satanic Majesty now as well as later," said Frank Reade, Jr., with a laugh.

"Golly, I don't tink he kalkilates on cheat-in' ob de old debbil at de las' ob it, Marse Frank," chuckled Pomp.

"Dhry up, ye naygur," retorted Barney. "It's shippin' Purgatory an' going straight into the red hot furnace y'e'll be afther doin', I'll bet me loife on that."

An exclamation from Frank now ended the controversy. They had come to a fork in the canyon, which proved to be not the junction of two distinct canyons but a parting of the one on either side of an island, as it might be called.



Here the waters ages before had separated and worn their respective channels down to the depth of fully four hundred feet. Certainly a stranger island than this could not be imagined.

With its high walls of limestone the island looked like a mighty pillar or column rising skyward in the center of the canyon. Certainly it was a wonderful device of nature.

These walls being perpendicular, could not be scaled by human being. The summit of the mighty pillar of rock or island, if such it could be called, was crowned with vegetation. Its surface must amount to quite an expanse, for its length up the canyon was several hundred yards.

Frank Reade, Jr., gazed at this wonderful island in the canyon with certain wonderment and a critical eye. An idea had been suggested to him.

The distance between the summit of the island and the verge of the canyon wall, both being on a level, was less than one hundred feet. What an admirable spot for the stronghold of the outlaws.

"I wonder if that is where it is?" he muttered. "It would not be difficult to cross over there with a temporary bridge."

"Golly, Marse Frank!" exclaimed Pomp, with distended eyeballs. "Yo' don't tink dem yer outlaws am up dere, does yo'?"

"That is just what I am thinking, Pomp," declared the young inventor. "It would be a likely place, wouldn't it?"

"Howly Mither!" gasped Barney, craning his neck. "That's quare enough. Howiver wud the blagyards get over there, Misther Frank?"

"Easy enough," replied Frank Reade, Jr. "A temporary drawbridge could be rigged. Once they crossed over they could draw it after them, and it would be difficult indeed to reach them."

Barney made a grimace of comprehension, and Pomp stared in wonderment. But at that moment, Frank Reade, Jr., cried out:

"Look! what did I tell you?"

Sure enough, across the chasm a foot-bridge, made of strong saplings, was being lowered by means of rope and tackle. The next moment half a dozen armed men were seen to cross it.

So absorbed were our friends in the contemplation of this remarkable sight, that they wholly forgot that their position was an exposed one, and simultaneous with a rifle shot which rang through the canyon, Pomp gave a sharp cry, then threw up his arms and fell.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### DEMANDING A SURRENDER.

THE three reconnoiterers had by the merest accident stumbled upon the stronghold of Black Carlos and his gang. Of this Frank Reade, Jr., felt assured.

But, in that moment of watching the lowering of the drawbridge so far above, it was unfortunate that they did not think of their exposed position.

The rifle shot and Pomp's fall apprised Frank Reade, Jr., of this. In an instant he sprang to the side of the stricken dandy.

"My God!" he gasped. "Are you badly hurt, Pomp? Don't say that. How stupid of me not to have guarded against this."

With Barney's help he carried Pomp around an angle in the canyon and out of range.

By what was positively a stroke of fortune Pomp's life was spared. He opened his eyes and came out of his faint as soon as Frank and Barney reached a safe locality.

He had heard Frank's exclamation and cried: "Ise all right, Mars Frank. Dat debbil ob an outlaw didn't kill dis chile dis time. Ise only stunned, dat's all."

"Begorra, dat's a lucky thing for ye, naygur!" cried Barney, joyfully. "An' where was ye hit, me gossoon?"

"I done tink it was in de head," replied Pomp.

"Whurrool! Yez are safe, thin!" cried the Hibernian, wildly. "There's no bullet around here phwat would crack yer skull, me sunburned frind."

Frank made a quick examination, and was overjoyed to find that Pomp's wound was one of little consequence, the bullet having grazed the skull, stunning him for a moment, and inflicting only a slight scalp wound.

"It's a close escape for you, Pomp," declared the young inventor. "I thought I'd lost one of my best friends, for sure."

"Don' yo' fret, Marse Frank!" cried Pomp. "De bullet amn't made fo' to kill dis nigger yet. Ise all right, yo' bet."

"Well, now that this is a settled question," cried Frank, "I think we had better get back to the Cyclone as soon as possible, or we may find ourselves in a hornet's nest."

Back to the Cyclone they now went. But before they reached it the illumination of torches were seen far up on the canyon walls, and they knew that the outlaws were up to some new dodge. But Frank Reade, Jr., was determined to be ready for them.

Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder had kept close guard on the Cyclone's deck during their absence. As they neared the Cyclone now rifle muzzles were thrust through loopholes, and the doctor's voice was heard:

"Hold! Who goes there?"

"All right, doctor!" cried Frank, cheerily.

"I think you ought to know me quite well."

"Thank Heaven you have come back all safe!" cried the scientist, joyfully. "We feared the worst. We heard a rifle shot and had all we could do to keep from going to your aid."

"You did wisely in not doing so," said Frank, as he sprang on deck.

Explanations then followed, and the doctor and the detective listened with thrilling sensations to the news that the new stronghold was discovered.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke, excitedly. "How can we ever attack the villains in such a place as that?"

"There is only one way to bring them to terms," declared Frank.

"What is that?"

"To lay siege to their stronghold."

"You are right," chorused Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder. "Starve them out as it were."

Madge had been standing nearby an interested listener. She turned pale, and hastily exclaimed:

"But what of Enid? Will she not suffer also?"

"You are right," cried Frank Reade, Jr. "She must be rescued in some way. But how? There is a way, and I'll find it out."

The young inventor now sprang to the searchlight. During their exploration of the canyon darkness had settled down thickly, and it was difficult to tell the points of the compass.

But the rays of the electric light went streaming along the canyon wall. Then Frank ordered Barney to reverse the Cyclone's engines and let her run backward slowly.

In this way, by feeling their way with the searchlight, they were enabled to run out of the canyon. Then Frank began to look for a feasible place to ascend to the top of the canyon wall.

This was not accomplished that night, and some time after midnight the attempt was abandoned. As nothing was seen of the outlaws all turned in except Pomp, who kept watch, to get some sleep. No incident worthy of note occurred during the night.

With daybreak Frank Reade, Jr., was on deck, and search was at once made for a means of ascent to the summit of the canyon wall.

By good fortune, a horse trail was found which led into a broad and smooth path. Undoubtedly this was the road used by the outlaw band.

Up this Frank ran the Cyclone. After a circuitous course they finally reached level ground. Not a hundred yards ahead were the precipitous sides of the chasm.

The drawbridge was seen on the other side of the chasm, but no sign of the outlaws. It was seen that the island in the canyon was thickly wooded, and it was no doubt this growth which concealed the stronghold from view.

Frank Reade, Jr., caused the Cyclone to be run up alongside of the chasm. He was now within speaking distance of the island.

At first the young inventor had thought of stirring up those on the island with the electric gun.

A bolt thrown into its center would shake them up pretty well, and it would have been an easy matter to have swept every vestige of vegetable and animal life from the place with the deadly gun. But there was an important fact to consider.

Enid Weston was, without doubt, confined on the island, and to bombard it, might be at the sacrifice of her life. Until she was rescued, such stringent measures could not be adopted.

Frank realized this and abandoned the idea. The question now was how to rescue Enid? At this juncture, and while thus in doubt, a surprising incident occurred.

Upon the drawbridge opposite, a man appeared with a white flag. He waved it a moment and shouted:

"Hello! the Cyclone!"

"Hello!" answered Frank Reade, Jr.

"I want to parley with you."

"Proceed."

"Are you Frank Reade, Jr.?"

"Yes."

"I am Carlos Coleman. Come out and talk with me."

The young inventor gazed at the flag of truce and then, without hesitation, opened the door in the steel netting and descended to the ground.

He advanced to the edge of the canyon wall. They were now not one hundred feet apart. Coleman, dressed in dashing Mexican garb, regarded Frank Reade, Jr., with a sardonic smile.

"Well, Mr. Reade," he said, with sarcasm, "you have done well to track me to this place. What are you going to do about it?"

"I will tell you," replied Frank, coolly. "I shall keep you prisoner where you are until you see fit to surrender."

"Indeed! How are you going to keep me a prisoner here?"

"The first man who attempts to leave that island will be blown to atoms with my electric gun."

Coleman laughed scornfully.

"You and your gun cannot be in two places at once," he declared. "You forget that we have a bridge on the other side of the canyon as well."

"You also forget," retorted Frank, "that my gun can cover both bridges. Beware, Carlos Coleman, if I chose I could blow you and your gang from the face of the earth before you could even leave the trap you are now in."

"Trap?" gasped Coleman.

"Yes, for such it is. I give you fair warning. Deliver up Enid Weston to me, safe and well, or I will blow you all to perdition. I demand an immediate answer."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE PARLEY—POMP'S DARING FEAT.

CARLOS COLEMAN, the outlaw, seemed for a moment agast at the stern declaration of Frank Reade, Jr. He had seen the work of the deadly electric gun, and knew its power.

For a moment he was irresolute. Then, in a whimpering way, he replied:

"Oh, you can't scare me that way. That is a bluff that won't work."

"I want an answer," declared Frank, shortly.

"Will you surrender or not?"

"Surrender?"

"Yes."

"Do you take me for a fool?"

"You will consider yourself such very quickly if you don't give me an answer."

Coleman was silent a moment. He was doing some shrewd thinking. He gazed apprehensively at the Cyclone and the destructive electric gun.

It was plain that he feared the dread work of the destroyer. Yet he was loath to surrender so easily.

"Look here, Frank Reade, Jr.," he said, finally, "why can't we compromise?"

"I have offered a compromise," replied Frank.

"What, pray?"

"Deliver up Enid Weston, alive and well, and I'll leave you in your stronghold unmolested. That is very fair, for I ought to make an example of you and hang you on the first tree as a thief and a murderer."

"You talk as if you had the best of the situation," sneered Coleman.

"So I have," averred Frank.

"Well, I'll accept your compromise on one condition."

"Name it."

"Some time ago I laid my heart at the feet of Madge Weston. I loved her, and I still love her. I will give her a fortune and a happy home, and restore Enid to her the moment she will agree to accept my hand in marriage."

It chanced that this declaration reached the ears of Madge, who was on the Cyclone's deck listening to the colloquy. She instantly made reply:

"Carlos Coleman," she declared, resolutely, "You may as well have my answer once and for all. No power on earth would induce me to marry you. I loath you!"

The villain's face turned livid. "We shall see!" he gritted. "I'll wring your proud heart yet and make you beg, Madge Weston. You will yet be glad to accept my suit."

Then he turned his gaze upon Frank.

"As for you and your electric gun, I defy



you!" he cried. "You dare not fire upon us. The first bolt may take the life of Enid as well as others. I dare you to execute your threat."

Then in flagrant violation of the truce Coleman drew a pistol and fired at Frank. The ball whistled by Frank's head. He instantly dropped flat on the ground.

It was lucky that he did this, for Coleman's shot was the signal for a storm of bullets from the island. They were flattened against the steel netting of the Cyclone and did no harm.

A wild cry arose from those on board the Cyclone at this treacherous act.

"Oh, Marse Frank am done killed!" cried Pomp, wildly.

"No, no!" cried the young inventor, still keeping his recumbent position. "I am all right. You need not fear for me. Give the wretches a volley!"

His orders were instantly obeyed. A raking volley from the Cyclone drove the outlaws from their position, and Frank Reade, Jr., was able to reach the Cyclone's deck.

It had been by nothing short of a miracle that his life was spared. The treachery of Coleman was roundly condemned.

Indeed, Frank had determined to prove to the outlaws that he was master of the situation.

He trained the electric gun and sent a bolt across the chasm. It struck the nearest drawbridge, and for a instant the air was one sheet of flame. The next moment not a vestige was to be seen of the bridge.

The Cyclone was within easy range of the drawbridge upon the other side of the island.

Indeed, outlaws could be seen rushing to this to lower it and escape, for they evidently feared that the young owner of the terrible Cyclone was about to execute his threat and blow them from the face of the earth.

Frank saw the move, and exclaimed:

"I'll spoil that little game!"

He trained the gun and pressed the electric key. The next moment a pathway of flame swept across the island. When it ceased in the flash of a second, the second drawbridge was blown out of sight.

The last avenue of escape from the outlaws' stronghold was destroyed. They seemed now wholly at Frank Reade, Jr.'s mercy.

In one sense this was true. In another they were practically safe.

Having cut them off from escape from the island, Frank was satisfied. He did not attempt the further destruction of their stronghold for the very good reason that it would endanger the life of the young girl whose life it was his purpose to save.

He now had the enemy completely besieged. It would be an easy matter to starve them into surrender.

But again the case of little Enid was considered. She must necessarily suffer herself. Frank knew well the feelings of Madge upon the subject, and he resolved to attempt the rescue of the captive child in another way.

Accordingly, he called Barney and Pomp into the cabin.

He had much faith in the sagacity and shrewdness of both these faithful servitors. At once he laid the matter clearly and concisely before them.

"Now, what do you think of it?" he asked. "Do either of you know a good plan to rescue the girl?"

"Begorra, av I had a balloon I'd go over mighty quick," cried Barney. "Troth, it's only the question of crossin' the bloody deep chasm."

"Huh!" grunted Pomp. "I've done got a bettah plan dan dat."

"P'what does yez say, naygur?" cried Barney, incredulously. "P'ra'ps ye'll elocidate it thin, me foin birrud?"

"I reckon I kin do dat, Fish," retorted Pomp. "Jes' yo' let me take dat trick, Marse Frank, I'll do it fo' suah."

"Whurroo! not so fast, naygur!" cried Barney. "It's me firsh' whack."

"I done leabe it to Marse Frank."

"Begorra, o'ill do that."

"Well," said Frank, with sudden resolution. "Suppose you try your plan first, Pomp. Then if it does not work, Barney can try his."

Thus the matter was settled. Barney, of course, envied Pomp the preference. But he made no demur to Frank's ruling.

The plucky dandy went to work in a cool manner to carry out his plans. While in Mexico, some years previous, he had learned well the trick of throwing the lariat.

Indeed there few more proficient in the art.

He waited the coming of darkness. Previous to this he had located the stump of a pine upon

the verge of the island, and carefully measured the distance with his eye.

It was near the hour of midnight when he appeared on the Cyclone's deck ready for action.

Pomp carried a small arsenal of weapons in his belt, and was lightly dressed. He held a long, strong lariat in his hand.

Accompanied by Frank, Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder, he left the Cyclone and walked to the edge of the chasm. The opposite wall of the island could be only dimly seen.

A dismal wind was sighing and sighing in the canyon. There were drops of rain in the air. At times vivid flashes of lightning rent the gloom. A storm, possibly a furious tornado, was threatening.

It had been arranged that Barney should, upon a given signal, throw the rays of the search-light across the gorge.

Pomp stood upon the verge of the chasm.

At a word from Frank, Barney threw the search-light across the chasm. Of course there was a risk in doing this.

There was the possibility that a guard might be upon the other side and see their action. In such a case the scheme might fail.

In the path of the search-light the four men were revealed, and also the black pine stump on the other side of the gorge. Without a moment's hesitation Pomp whirled the lariat over his head.

Its length went flying across the gorge. The aim was wonderfully true. The noose settled down over the stump gracefully and Pomp drew the lariat tight. Its hold was firm and stout.

Then the search-light was shut off and in one moment the four men were in darkness.

"Jes' yo' gemmen hol' tight on de rope," declared Pomp, coolly, "an' I jes' go across dar in a jiffy."

Frank and the others complied. They gripped the end of the lariat. Pomp at once stepped off the edge of the canyon wall and began to go hand over hand across the gorge.

So intense was the darkness that he was instantly lost to sight. But they knew that he was on the lariat by the vibration and weight.

The scheme seemed likely to be a success. Frank Reade, Jr., experienced a thrill of triumph.

But at that moment a fearful incident transpired. The action of the four had been seen on the other side. The darkness was broken by a vivid flash; the report of a rifle smote upon the murky air.

Some one upon the island had fired the shot. By a strange act of fate, the lariat parted, and Pomp's body went hurtling down through space.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ACROSS THE CANYON.

FRANK READE, JR., and his companions were hurled backwards with the suddenness of the lariat's breaking. Like a flash, a correct realization dawned upon the young inventor.

He was overwhelmed with horror as he thought of Pomp dead and mangled at the bottom of the gorge.

Yet, he did not lose his presence of mind, and shouted to Barney:

"Throw on the search-light! Quick!"

In an instant the faithful Irishman obeyed the command. The lights flooded the gorge, but no sign of the darky or the outlaw who had fired the fatal shot was seen.

At that instant, with a fearful, thunderous roar, the tornado, long threatening, broke through the gorge. The air was filled with flying debris, rain and sand, and the thunder pealed among the mountain crags with frightful force. Its fury was beyond description.

Human beings, in their exposed position, could hardly expect to withstand its force, so Frank led the way quickly to the Cyclone.

Barney met them, with loud lamentations for Pomp's fate.

"Och, it was a black skin he had, but a throe heart!" he cried, in a wailing voice. "O! shall miss him loike me own brother!"

The breaking of the lariat had been a mystery to Frank at the time. But he had the end of it in his hand when he reached the Cyclone, and he now examined it.

The lariat had been cut, not ten feet from the verge of the canyon wall. The cut was neat and clean, like that of a knife. But Frank discovered a bit of lead in the fiber. This settled all doubt at once.

"It was the bullet fired from the island that

cut it," he declared. "By a strange chance it struck the rope. What a fatality!"

"Indeed!" said Dr. Vaneyke, hopefully. "I don't see why we should as yet give Pomp up for dead. Was not the other end of the lariat very strongly secured to the stump?"

"It was."

"Then, if he was able to stand the shock of a collision with the opposite wall, and should cling to the lariat, he might, perhaps, make his way up it safely."

"That is my one hope," declared Frank Reade, Jr.

Accepting this theory as a strong possibility, all now looked forward hopefully. It was decided, however, to visit the bottom of the canyon at once, and ascertain whether Pomp fell from the lariat or not.

If he fell, his body must be found. If it was not found, it would be safe to assume that he had gained the island.

Frank Reade, Jr., and Dr. Vaneyke decided to visit the canyon's depths. The storm's first fury was over now, and it was safe for them to venture out.

Accordingly, equipped with rubber garments and well armed, they left the Cyclone. It was dangerous work, making their way down into the canyon.

But they finally succeeded, and were rewarded with a thrilling disappointment. The storm had converted the bed of the canyon into a roaring torrent.

It was impossible to make their way through it, or to learn Pomp's fate. If he had fallen into the canyon, his body had been swept away by the torrent.

"My God!" gasped Frank in horror. "I fear the worst!"

"We will not give up hope," said Dr. Vaneyke, grimly.

There was no course but to return to the Cyclone. But suddenly Dr. Vaneyke clutched Frank's arm.

"Wait a moment!" he said.

"What is it?"

"Wait for the next lightning flash. Then right above us you will see a tall pine tree growing out over the edge of the canyon."

"I see it," said Frank, as a flash lit up the sky above. "What of it?"

"I have an idea. That tree must be all of eighty feet high. The chasm here is not over sixty feet wide. If we should lop off that tree at the trunk and let it fall across the chasm, we would have a good bridge. It is not likely that many of the outlaws will be abroad to-night. They will not be looking for an attack from us, and we can surprise them. At least, we can learn if Pomp is safe or not."

Frank Reade, Jr., was silent a moment. Then he exclaimed:

"Vaneyke, I believe you are right! That is a capital plan. We can work safely under cover of the storm."

"I think so."

"Let us try it."

Back to the Cyclone they now went with all haste. Matters were explained to the others and plans were fully elaborated.

Then work was begun. With axes Barney and Snyder assailed the tree. Soon the mighty monarch began to bend and then with a crash it toppled over.

The judgment of the choppers proved excellent. The tree was stretched across the gorge, forming an excellent bridge.

To cross it was the next move.

The storm still raged through the hills. The rain fell in torrents. There was no sign of life from the island, and thus far all plans had worked admirably.

All now armed themselves. Madge alone was left aboard the Cyclone. Frank explained to her as a precaution some of the mechanism of the Cyclone and also gave directions in regard to the search-light, and a series of signals.

The brave girl made reply:

"The foe will never capture the Cyclone as long as I can keep up strength to defend it. Do not fear for me."

Barney led the way across the improvised bridge.

The others followed one by one. They assembled in a dense thicket, and Frank Reade, Jr., now assumed command.

It was decided to push on with as much rapidity and caution as possible, to the center of the canyon isle, where the stronghold was supposed to be.

Indian strategy was to be employed, and no open attack was to be made in view of the outlaws' superior force.

This was a daring move, thus invading the



foes' territory with only a precarious bridge as a means of retreat. But under Frank Reade, Jr.'s, direction the little party pressed on.

In the dense thickets ludicrous situations were encountered, and many times they nearly resulted in casualty. Once Frank Reade, Jr., saw a dark form before him, and, springing forward, grappled with it.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### TO THE RESCUE.

FRANK READE, JR., was sure that the person he grappled with was an outlaw guard. Only a fortunate incident at that moment prevented a sad fatality.

A vivid lightning flash lit up the vicinity at that moment. In its glare Frank saw the features of his man plainly revealed.

A wild, startled cry burst from his lips.

"Upon my word, it is Pomp!" he cried. "Heaven be praised!"

"Marse Frank!" cried the astonished darky. "What on earth am' yo' doin' ob yere?"

In a moment Pomp was surrounded by the excited invaders of Black Carlos' stronghold. Explanations were in order.

With the cutting of the lariat Pomp had not gone down to his death in the canyon as feared. Fortunately, he was nearly across the gorge. He swung with some force against the canyon wall.

But the lariat did not break, and he found footing upon a small shelf of rock. Here he crouched for some time until the storm had spent its force. Then he went hand over hand up to the verge of the cliff above.

He had not been idle in the interim. He had taken a scouting trip about the island, and had made some startling discoveries.

"I tol' yo' fo' a fac, Marse Frank, I done believe I hab found out whar dey hab hidden de little gal!" he declared, excitedly.

At once Frank was interested.

"Have you, then, seen any of the gang, Pomp?" he asked.

"I should say dat was so," replied Pomp. "I done foun' my way almos' right into de very haht of de enemies' camp."

"Could you not effect her rescue?"

"Dar warn't no show at all, dat I could see, Marse Frank," declared the darky. "I jes' crawled up a most to de do' ob a leetle cabin dey was dar, an' I tried fo' to crawl up to de winder. But jes' den a guard came along, an' I had to skip."

"What next?"

"I done tink it de bes' ting fo' me to hang around yer till mawnin', an' den p'raps I could work some new trick. But dere warn't no manner ob use ob my tryin', single-handed, fo' to stan' off de whole tribe ob dem, for a suttin' fac."

"Whurroo!" grunted Barney, contemptuously. "If yez had a leetle O'rish wit, naygur, yed have found a way to resky the leetle gal. I give yez the truth on it."

Pomp lowered his head and made a motion in Barney's direction. The Hibernian joker discreetly retreated.

"Come, this is no time for fooling," said Frank, sharply. "How large a force have the outlaws on this island, Pomp?"

"I done tink dere am mos a hundred ob dem, Marse Frank."

The young inventor made a wry face.

"Twenty to one!" he ejaculated. "I don't hardly believe it will pay us to charge on the camp, boys. If we carry our point without the aid of the Cyclone it must be by strategy."

"If that is the case," said the detective, Duncan Snyder, "let me try my hand at it first. Are you willing?"

"What is your plan?" asked Frank.

"To wait until their camp is quiet, then, in some manner, silence the guard and make the rescue. With the girl once in our hands we can easily make a safe retreat to the fallen tree by which we crossed."

"But that is the very trick tried by Pomp," declared Frank Reade, Jr. "He was not rewarded with success."

"Circumstances might not have been favorable at that time," replied the detective. "Allow me to make the effort, and I will almost swear to succeed."

"Very well," replied Frank. "You shall try it, Mr. Snyder. Proceed! We are under your orders."

"Pomp!" cried the detective, "the first move will be for you to show us to the enemies' camp. Please lead the way."

"All right, boss," cried Pomp, readily.

"Jes' all ob yo' foller me, but yo' must be drefful careful like."

The darky now led the way through the dense undergrowth. After a time, however, they came into a beaten path. Here they were enabled to progress more rapidly.

But it was necessary to use the utmost caution. Very soon lights were seen through the darkness ahead.

The storm had abated its fury now, and the force of the tornado had passed over. The night was dark as Erebus, but this only favored the plans of the rescuers.

"Dere am de camp," said Pomp, suddenly coming to a halt. "Jes' yo' look out fo' snags now, gemmen."

"All right, Pomp," rejoined Snyder, with a light laugh. "Leave that to me. Now I have one request to make."

"What is that?" asked Frank Reade, Jr.

"That you accompany me, Mr. Reade."

"What is your scheme?"

"Come with me, and I will tell you. Let all the others remain here. If I fire two quick sharp shots you are to answer and give yells to draw the enemy after you. Then retreat to the fallen tree and cross over to the Cyclone. Never mind us. We will find another way of getting back."

Snyder's plan was a little foggy to the others, but no demur was made. With Frank Reade, Jr., by his side he began to creep slowly and cautiously nearer to the outlaw's camp.

As they drew nearer, the light of many camp fires were seen. The camp was upon a sort of wide plateau, hemmed in with a heavy growth of trees. Almost in the center of the camp was a small cabin.

Without doubt this was the cabin referred to by Pomp as the stronghold in which Enid Weston was confined. Duncan Snyder came to an astonished halt.

"Whew!" he muttered in a half whisper, "no wonder Pomp could do nothing toward the rescue of the girl, Mr. Reade. Why, it would be a smart Indian trailer who could make his way through the foe's camp and enter that cabin. The situation looks dubious."

"You are right!" agreed Frank. "But if we only had the Cyclone here it would look quite different."

"Well, we must make the best of it!" declared the detective.

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to try and gain an entrance to that cabin."

"How?"

"Wait here until I return. If I do not return in one hour you will know that I am dead."

"But I object!" interposed Frank Reade, Jr.

"What for?"

"You are assuming all the risk. Let me go with you."

"Mr. Reade," said Snyder, solemnly, "do you remember your promise to me? I am engineering this affair. I am deadly in earnest. Indeed, I shall sacrifice my life if I do not succeed. Is not that evidence of my sincerity?"

"Yes," acknowledged the famous inventor.

"Very well. Please allow me to use my own discretion."

Frank Reade, Jr., subsided and sank down in the cover of a thicket. The detective crept away in the gloom, and in a twinkling was out of sight.

The young inventor could not help feeling a sharp thrill of apprehension. He hardly understood the game which Snyder meant to play. But he tried to console himself with the reflection that the detective was a shrewd fellow and ought to know his part well.

The seconds drifted into minutes, and the minutes into an hour. Frank Reade, Jr., remembered the admonition of Snyder, and a chill passed over him.

Had the detective met his fate? But at that instant a startling incident completely changed the aspect of affairs.

Two sharp pistol shots in quick succession were heard, and then a cry of mortal agony. In an instant Frank Reade, Jr., was upon his feet.

The climax had been reached, and now the keenest of work was required. Frank heard the rush of feet in his rear, and knew that his comrades were coming.

The next moment Pomp and Barney and Dr. Vaneyke, all much excited, burst out of the undergrowth.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CAPTURED.

THE incidents which followed came in rapid succession. The report of the pistol was an alarm which brought every sleeping outlaw to his feet.

In an instant all was a scene of excitement. The whole plateau was covered with hurrying, skurrying men. It was evident that the villains believed themselves attacked. The alarm was general.

It was at this critical moment that Frank Reade, Jr., remembered the parting instruction of Snyder. These were to fire upon the outlaws and draw them away in pursuit. Like a flash, a comprehension of Snyder's purpose flashed across Frank's mind.

"I see it!" he cried. "While the camp is deserted, he will make the attempt to rescue Enid. A brilliant bit of strategy, and all depends upon us whether it succeeds or not. Give them a volley, boys. Yell your loudest!"

Of course the order was instantly obeyed. Shots were fired at the outlaws, and every effort made to attract their attention.

In this way they were eminently successful. The whole gang, with Black Carlos at their head, came charging down upon them.

It would have been folly to attempt to stand ground, so Frank Reade, Jr., gave the order to retreat. Back through the dense undergrowth they went, with the enemy close upon them.

Pomp was endowed with a remarkably pugnacious spirit, and much desired to stand ground and fight the foe.

"Fo' de Lor, Marse Frank, I done wish we had de electric gun here!" he cried. "I tink we'd teach dem a lesson dey wouldn't very much like."

"Begorra, it's lucky we'll be if we git out av this bloody place alive," objected Barney. "Oi have no loikin' for shtandin' me ground against such odds, be me sowl. If yez wants to do it yez kin, naygur."

"Huh! Neber did see a Tishman what had any courage," said Pomp, contemptuously.

"Aisy, now, ye obonized fraud," retorted Barney. "Don't yez insult Barney O'Shea, or the fusht thing yez knows yez won't know anything. For half a cint I'd engage to knock that flat nose of yours into dacint shape, that I would!"

Pomp was just in Barney's rear at the moment. Before he could reply to the Celt's badinage, Barney took advantage of what he considered a prime opportunity to get "hunk" with his friend. Passing through a thicket, he carried the end of a long, stiff branch with him until it was almost bent double.

Then he let it fly back. With such swiftness and force did it come, that, striking Pomp fair over the eyes it tumbled him over upon the ground like a shot out of a catapult.

For a moment, the Ethiopian was unable to realize what had happened. Then as the smarting pain ceased, and his head ceased to swim, he heard Barney's mocking laughter. In an instant he was upon his feet.

"Golly!" he gasped. "I done teach dot Tish mucker better manners dan dat."

After Barney he dashed, and Frank and Dr. Vaneyke heard them scuffling in the distance. But there was no need of haste for the foe were close behind.

On they dashed through the undergrowth. Soon they came to the verge of the canyon. But it seemed that they must have misjudged their way, for the tree which spanned the chasm and by which they had crossed was not there.

Which way should they go? The enemy were close in pursuit and there was no time to lose.

"Where is the spot?" cried Frank, excitedly.

"Do you remember the locality, Vaneyke?"

"Perfectly well," replied the doctor. "And this is certainly the place. I will take my oath on that."

"It can't be."

"It certainly is."

"But, where is the tree?"

Dr. Vaneyke went to the edge of the chasm and tried to peer down through the darkness. He could see nothing.

"That is queer!" he muttered.

Then he knelt down and examined the ground. When he arose he trembled like an aspen leaf, and in a choking voice, said:

"My God! the tree has given way and fallen into the canyon."

Frank Reade, Jr., was for a moment stunned by this declaration. He exclaimed in a hollow voice:

"Are you not mistaken, doctor?"

"Look for yourself."



"Then, we are lost!"

The sounds of pursuit could be heard in their rear. To cross the chasm was a flat impossibility. It was a species of trap and their fate seemed sealed.

In daylight it might have been possible to invent a temporary way of bridging the abyss. But the time was now too brief and the darkness too intense.

Barney and Pomp had heard the declaration, but did not evince fear.

"We's gwine to die hard, Marse Frank," declared the brave negro. "If we's got to fight we kin jes' show dem po' white trash what we's good fo'."

"Begorra, that's so," agreed Barney.

"My brave fellows," said the young inventor

cutting out for himself. But as fate had it, Frank Reade, Jr., was the unlucky one of the quartette.

He struck into the woods at an angle from the direction in which he believed the foe were coming. But in the darkness, in some manner, he strangely misjudged the direction and almost before he was aware of it dark forms were swarming about him.

He made a determined resistance, but the odds were too great and he was thrown to the ground and securely bound. The light of a lantern was flashed in his face, and with a wild yell one of the outlaws cried:

"By Jupiter! luck is with us, boys. This is the old bird. We're in great luck for once." Frank Reade, Jr., looked up into the triumph-

returned from the other side, and tells me that you came across on a fallen tree, and that you had left Miss Madge Weston alone on board the Cyclone. He took the pains to cut off your retreat by tumbling the tree into the canyon, after he had crossed himself. He had just reached camp when the alarm was sounded. What a clever trap! Ha, ha, ha!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE OUTLAW'S TRICK.

The outlaw's mocking, sardonic laugh jarred harshly upon Frank's nerves. Too late he saw the folly of their move in visiting the island. Their movements then had been spotted by one of the outlaws. This explained the removal



Pomp started the Cyclone in the direction of the scene of action. In a few moments it was speeding to the rescue. At sight of it the savages, with wild yells, fled. A few shots were bestowed upon them, and then Frank Reade, Jr., and Barney rushed out of their place of security, and came aboard.

with deep feeling. "I have no doubt of your sincerity and your bravery. But it will be simply impossible for us to hope for victory against such odds."

"What shall we do?" asked Dr. Vaneyke. "We must make action of some sort."

An inspiration seized Frank Reade, Jr.

"There is but one plan which we can safely adopt," he declared. "And that is to separate. Each man take a different direction. This will puzzle the enemy and we can perhaps find some way of getting back to the Cyclone. We cannot be so easily captured at all events."

"That is correct," cried Dr. Vaneyke. "It is our best plan. What say you, Pomp and Barney?"

"I jes' does what Marse Frank says," declared Pomp.

"Be jabers, that's me," agreed Barney.

"Then let that be the order," cried Frank. "Get back to the Cyclone the quickest way now—separate all."

The word was given and obeyed. The next moment the spot was deserted and each was

ant features of Carlos Coleman himself. The young inventor's heart sank, though he betrayed no fear.

This was all that Coleman said at the time. The quest for the others was continued, but, after a time, Black Carlos, with half a score of his men, returned.

"Scour the island, and capture every dog of them!" he cried, vindictively. "This is the time you ran your neck into a pretty trap, Mr. Frank Reade, Jr. You will not escape so easily as before!"

"I am certainly your prisoner," declared Frank, coolly.

"How in the name of Satan did you ever get onto this island?" cried the outlaw chief.

"Moreover, where have you left your wonderful Cyclone?"

"Those are questions which I am not bound to answer," replied Frank.

"Indeed!" sneered Coleman. "It matters little to me whether you do or not. I have just learned the full particulars of your cleverly planned invasion. One of our spies has just

of the temporary bridge over the chasm. Altogether it was an unfortunate affair.

But the climax was capped when the villain Coleman continued:

"You have delivered the game right into my hands, my dear Mr. Reade. How easy it will be now for me to go over and seize the Cyclone. That I shall do this very night. Of course your companions on this island cannot get off. I shall hunt them down at my leisure. I may safely tell you now that there is a secret way of leaving the island which is known only to myself. I shall go over and take charge of the wonderful Cyclone and the fair Madge this moment. She shall become my bride perforce, and you shall teach me the workings of the Cyclone so that I can take my bridal tour on board it. Ha, ha, ha! What a lucky dog I am! How kind of you to play the game into my hands this way!"

Every word uttered by the wretch, Frank Reade, Jr., knew was to him a knell of doom. Never in his life had he felt so utterly disheartened as at this moment.



He deigned no reply to the taunting words of Coleman. The latter turned and gave orders to his men, who proceeded to lead Frank away through the woods.

In a short while they came once more in sight of the fires of the camp. A few moments later they were upon the small plateau.

Then Coleman, who was in the lead, gave an exclamation of surprise. The cause of this was apparent. About the door of the cabin which had been Enid's prison, a number of men were gathered.

The door was wide open and an oath was upon Coleman's lips as he rushed up to the spot. "What's all this?" he cried savagely. "What's up? Speak somebody."

One of the outlaws ventured to say:

of it Jim Brown chanced to go by the door and saw it open. He went in and found the house empty."

"When was this?"

"About half an hour after you left with the gang."

"Who was on guard?"

"Mike Weely," was the reply.

"Where is he now?" roared Coleman. "I want to see him explain this thing."

By way of reply one of the outlaws lifted the flap of a tarpaulin which lay upon the ground. The dead face of the guard was seen under it, with a livid gash across the temple.

"Treachery!" yelled Coleman. "Who has done this thing? Ah! I see how it was done."

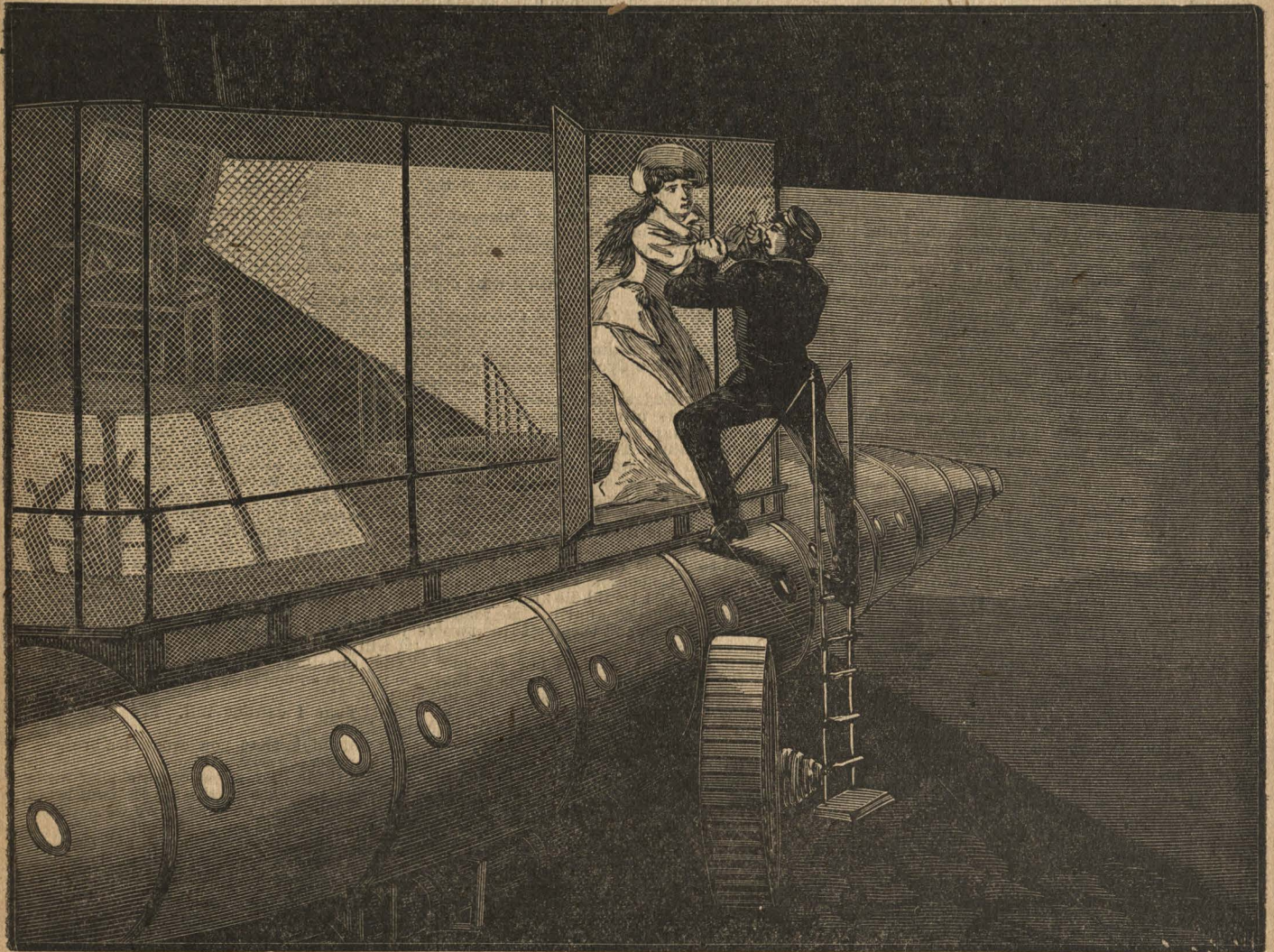
The outlaw chief drew himself up, and turn-

pan into the fire. And Frank felt with despair his utter powerlessness to prevent the working of fate.

He had but a faint ray of hope. Would Madge stand her ground on board the Cyclone? If she did, Frank felt sure that even single-handed she could hold the foe at bay.

He had carefully explained to her the manner of charging the steel hull with electricity, and even the working of the electric gun. As he thought of this, Frank felt renewed hope.

But Carlos Coleman was a crafty villain. He knew that it was not only possible, but quite certain that Madge was posted in this respect. He had, therefore, decided upon a different move. Strategy was the agent which he de-



Madge just caught a glimpse of Frank's cap and jacket and suspected nothing. But the moment the door swung open strong hands seized her wrists, and she was face to face with her mortal foe.

"She's gone, sir."

"Gone!" thundered the outlaw chief. "What do you say? Tell me the truth or I'll have you quartered."

"The gal, cap'en!" replied the trembling spokesman. "She is gone!"

The oaths which rolled from the lips of Black Carlos were hardly picturesque. They were vile and horrible.

He rushed into the cabin. The truth was before him. Enid Weston was gone. For a moment he was a madman.

Frank Reade, Jr., saw and understood all. In that moment he gave Duncan Snyder credit for more shrewdness than he had been inclined to hitherto.

"How did she escape, you blockheads?" thundered Coleman, as he emerged from the cabin. "Where is the guard? By heavens, he shall pay for this with his life!"

The villain's language and manner was terrifying. But one of the outlaws ventured to reply:

"If ye please, cap'en, the first thing we knew

ing to Frank Reade, Jr., with malevolent face, he rejoined:

"Your crew may have succeeded in getting the girl, and they did well. But I shall soon have Madge in my power. That will effect the score, so the triumph is mine after all. You and your gang have overreached, my famous inventor. Ha, ha! this is my day!"

Turning to his men with an authoritative gesture, he said:

"Put the prisoner in there and guard him well. If he is allowed to escape I'll have you all hung."

Frank Reade, Jr., was pushed into the hut and the door closed after him. Left to his own reflection in the darkness, the young inventor's thoughts were of a thrilling sort.

It had been cheering news to know that Snyder had rescued Enid.

The object of the expedition had been accomplished, but at what a cost? With Madge in the power of Coleman, though Enid was set free, what was gained?

It seemed literally a case of from the frying

terminated to employ. A cunning scheme had entered his brain.

While Frank Reade, Jr., was engaged in rumination in his prison chamber, the door suddenly opened, and Black Carlos and two men came in.

"Well, Mr. Reade!" he said, with mock suavity, "I've come to ask a favor of you. I want to borrow your hat and coat for a little while."

As he said this the outlaw took from Frank's head the natty blue naval cap which he usually wore. Then the young inventor was compelled to give up his handsome double-breasted reefer. Black Carlos donned these.

With sinking heart Frank realized the villain's purpose. He felt at that moment that all was lost.

"What do you think of me, for a big inventor and captain of the Cyclone?" cried the ruffian, with a jeering laugh. "Won't I pass for Frank Reade, Jr.?"

Then he left the hut. Frank gave up all hope in that moment. Black Carlos, upon leaving



the prison hut, called for a horse. It was procured, and two mounted men accompanied him.

Striking into a path he rode toward the upper end of the island. Suddenly pushing through some trees, he reached the base of a little hill, lock. In the side of this was a black hole yawning upward.

It was the mouth of a large cave treading downward. With a torch, one of the outlaws led the way through winding passages until suddenly they emerged again into open air.

If it had been daylight it would have been easy enough to see that the cave came out into the canyon far below. It was a wonderful freak of nature, and was the secret means of exit and entrance to their stronghold used by the outlaws.

Reaching the canyon bed the outlaw chief led the way at a gallop. Soon they passed out of the canyon and up the mountain side. At length he drew his horse up.

"Wait here," was all he said to his companions, and dismounting strode away. A moment later he came out upon the brow of the canyon wall, and the Cyclone was before him, the electric search-light flooding the canyon.

Boldly the outlaw chief went up to the gangway steps. A female figure was back of the steel-woven door, and Madge, for she it was, hailed him.

"Who comes there?"

"Frank Reade, Jr., replied Coleman, imitating Frank's voice. "Open the door, Madge."

Madge just caught a glimpse of Frank's cap and jacket and suspected nothing. But the moment the door swung open strong hands seized her wrists, and she was face to face with her mortal foe.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### COLEMAN'S HOUR OF TRIUMPH.

THE sensations of Madge Weston cannot be depicted in words. She gave utterance to a wild cry of horror, and tried to wrest herself from the grip of her foe.

"My God! It is Carlos Coleman!" she shrieked. "Treachery! Help! Help!"

But who was there to help her?

At a whistle from Coleman, the two companions of his were upon the spot instantly.

"Bind her!" he cried, with insane triumph. "My fine bird, fate has given you into my hands. Oh, you need not resist, I am your master."

So overcome with horror and desperation was Madge that she nearly fainted. She was quickly made a helpless prisoner by the ruffians, and then Coleman sprang upon the deck of the Cyclone with a whoop of triumph.

"Hurrah!" he yelled in fierce joy. "What a conquest this is! Eh, boys, we have now a fine palace on wheels. All mine! ha, ha, ha! all mine!"

Leaving Madge in the care of his companions, the outlaw chief sprang down into the Cyclone's cabin. He was spellbound with the neatness and elegance of its furnishings.

In the engine-room he beheld the brightly polished work of the electric engines and saw what a marvel of skill and fine workmanship the Cyclone really was.

He was elated beyond measure with the consciousness that the wonderful Cyclone was really in his possession.

"With this machine I can become the terror of the plains!" he cried, triumphantly. "Nothing shall bar my progress. I will invade Mexico, and bring the richest cities there to terms, for with the terrible electric gun I can sweep an army out of existence."

With some curiosity he began to examine the electric engines. Inadvertently, he chanced to place his hand upon a small metal disc. It chanced that this was one of the heavily charged indicators, and the result was terrific.

The kick of a horse furnishes no comparison to the manner in which Coleman was hurled across the room. Stunned, he picked himself up.

Every vein in his body tingled with the awful current, and there was a stinging burn in the palm of his hand.

It was a sheer wonder that he had not been instantly killed. It was a narrow escape.

The outlaw's first impulse was that of anger. He seized a heavy hammer and made a crushing blow at the disc. But the disc was of stanchest steel and, fortunately, did not break.

To the contrary, the hammer was hurled from Coleman's hand, and he was again tumbled end over end. This time the villain arose to his feet trembling with rage, but somewhat cooler.

"Curse my stupidity!" he gritted. "I ought to have known better nor that. S'posen I had smashed the thing! I'd have fouled my own nest. I'm a condemned idiot."

With this conclusion he sprang again to the deck. Madge was held in charge by the two outlaws. Coleman's face lit up with a fiendish expression as he went up to the young girl.

"Aha, my beauty!" he cried, exultantly.

"What do you think of trying to beat Carlos Coleman now? Thought ye did a bright thing when ye got this young chip of an inventor to chase me over the plains with his Electric Cyclone, didn't ye? But ye see No Man's Land is my native soil, an' when ye try to beat a man in his own dooryard, it's ten to one ye'll get beat."

Madge gazed coldly and unflinchingly at the villain.

"The end is not yet," was her firm and undaunted reply.

"Now ye're right there, puss," continued Coleman, coarsely. "But the advantage is mine and I mean to make use of it. Listen! You refused my offer of marriage and fairly insulted me. I swear to have revenge. More, I swear to bring you to terms. It begins to look as if I was a winner."

"Frank Reade, Jr., is on my side and you cannot defeat him," Madge retorted.

"He is already defeated," hissed Coleman. "He is a prisoner in my stronghold. At a word from me his life will go out like snuffing a candle."

"A prisoner?" gasped Madge, with a wail of despair. "Then all is lost!"

"That's the size of it," chuckled Coleman. "But ye needn't be afraid. I don't intend to kill him. I have uses for him. If he agrees to teach me how to run the Cyclone I shall spare his life."

A low moan was Madge's only answer. "With the Cyclone in my possession," said Coleman, modulating his voice, "I shall be a power on the plains. Things have changed, Madge, and I think you would do well to consider my old proposition of marriage. Only think, we could live like king and queen with the Cyclone for our palace. Think of it."

Madge recoiled as if from a poisonous serpent.

"Don't dare to insult me with such a proposal again, Carlos Coleman!" she cried, with scathing emphasis. "I would die first."

The outlaw's face flushed angrily. He made a gesture of impatience, and turning to his two servants, he cried:

"Take her in charge, and place her in safe keeping in the cabin. Put six guards at the door. See to it that she does not escape. Then return here with ten men, and bring Frank Reade, Jr., with you. I will await your return."

The two outlaws proceeded to obey their chief's command. Coleman shut the steel door after them, and then proceeded to make himself at home on board the Cyclone until they should return.

Madge was placed upon the horse rode by Coleman, and, a captive between the two outlaws, she was transported by means of the cavern to the canyon island, and securely confined in the hut where Enid had been kept a prisoner.

Frank Reade, Jr., was at the moment a prisoner in the other part of the hut. He did not know of Madge's capture, nor that the Cyclone had been taken, until a file of the outlaws entered and requested him to accompany them.

Wondering where he was to be taken, Frank suffered himself to be led out and placed upon the back of a horse. In the midst of the guard of ten men he was taken through the underground passage into the canyon.

From thence he was taken to the cliff, and, to his surprise, saw that he was to be taken to the Cyclone, which was now in sight. A chill of apprehension seized him.

"What! Has Coleman captured the Cyclone?" he asked of the outlaw nearest him. "That is a fact, stranger," was the reply.

Frank was almost overcome with horror. His fear that it would become Coleman's purpose to destroy the Cyclone was, however, speedily dissipated.

It required quite a length of time to bring Frank Reade, Jr., from the canyon island, and it was broad daylight when finally the party reached the cliff.

Coleman was seen on the Cyclone's deck. His face was the mirror of evil exultation and triumph as he greeted Frank Reade, Jr., who was brought aboard the Cyclone.

"Ha, my fine inventor!" he cried, in mocking

and triumphant accents. "The tables have turned within a few hours. Who is top of the heap now?"

Frank gazed coolly and calmly at the villain. "Well, you seem to have the best of it just now," he admitted, quietly.

"I should say so. Let me enumerate. The girl I have sworn shall be my wife is in my power. You are my prisoner, and your famous Cyclone is mine by right of conquest. Your friends are at my mercy, and, in short, I am the victor."

"That is all very true," agreed Frank.

"If I were to follow the dictates of prudence," continued Coleman, "I should have so slippery a fellow as you shot at twenty paces. But I have decided to spare your life on one condition."

"What is that?" asked Frank.

"That you will teach me the secret of running the Cyclone."

Frank Reade, Jr.'s mind was actively at work. A most daring plan was uppermost in his thoughts.

"Very well," he made reply. "On condition that you spare my life I will show you how to operate the Cyclone."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.

IT was a daring act indeed which Duncan Snyder, the detective, had made in effecting the rescue of Enid Weston in the manner he did.

There was no little risk in attacking the guard in the very heart of the outlaw's stronghold, but he was successful in vanquishing him.

When he so suddenly burst in upon the girl prisoner she was at first alarmed. But in a few brief seconds Snyder had allayed her fears by explaining his purpose and identity.

This was the first time that he had ever seen Enid Weston, but though the light was dim he beheld a slight, child-like form, and a sweet face, wonderfully mature for a girl of her years. Yet Enid was not of that wondrous mold of beauty possessed by her sister Madge.

"Oh, I am so glad that you have come to rescue me," Enid cried, clinging to his side. "I shall be so happy to get away from this awful place, and to see dear Madge once more."

"I hope to get you safely away from here, my child," Snyder declared. "But you must be very brave, and do just what I tell you."

"I will promise that," she replied, eagerly.

"One question," the detective continued. "Do you remember how you were brought to this place?"

"Ah! That I cannot tell. My eyes were blindfolded."

"Do you think that you crossed a bridge?" asked Snyder, eagerly.

"No. I think that we were for a long while in a cavern. I could hear the horses' hoof beats echoing hollow and deep as if we were underground. But I could see nothing."

"I will wager my life," muttered Snyder, slapping his hands together, "that there is a secret passage or way of leaving the island. I must find it."

These words had been hurriedly exchanged in the hut, just after Snyder's entrance. Enid was now ready to accompany him.

The detective, with the young girl by his side, glided out into the open air. The body of the guard lay near and they passed by it.

Enid gave a little shiver, but regained her spirits as they gained the cover of the shrubbery near. In a few moments they were safe among the trees.

Snyder kept on at random, only pausing to rest once in awhile. He knew that he was confronted with a tough problem, and was endeavoring hard to work it out.

If he did not leave the canyon island that night there was no doubt but that he would be recaptured by the outlaws. Yet there seemed no way of leaving the elevated islet.

To descend its steep sides was out of the question. There was no bridge. Snyder had thought of reaching the verge in sight of the Cyclone and of signaling to those on board.

But in the darkness he was at a loss to know what direction to take.

The position was a most dubious one, and it was only by the merest chance that he discovered a way out of the difficulty.

By good luck he struck into an obscure path and followed it blindly. It was really the path which led into the cavern, and very quickly the detective walked directly into it.

Scarcely knowing where he was, or whether



it would be safe to go further or not, Snyder lit a match. A dry fagot lay upon the ground. It chanced to be redolent with pitch, and, lighting it, Snyder had a most admirable torch.

The glare of the torch illuminated the roof of the cavern, and the detective saw that it tended downward. He was thrilled with a wild hope. "You feel quite positive Enid?" he asked, "that you were brought here through a cavern?"

"Yes, sir," replied the young girl, readily. "I may be mistaken though."

"I believe you are right," cried Snyder, exultantly. "And also that we have found the secret avenue of exit from the robbers' stronghold. We are in luck."

"Oh, that is good luck!" cried Enid.

"At least we will explore this cavern for a ways. One thing is certain. There is a well beaten path which leads into it. It is used for some purpose."

A hushed exclamation escaped Enid. She clung to the detective's arm.

"Oh, somebody is coming," she whispered.

"Where?"

"From up the path."

The detective now heard the sounds of some one approaching just as Enid had. It sounded like the beating of horses' hoofs. There was no time to lose.

Snyder crushed the blazing torch beneath his feet until every spark was extinguished. Then he drew Enid quickly into the shadows near and waited with bated breath.

Nearer came the sounds of horses' hoofs beating upon the dry ground. Then along the path and into the cavern galloped three men.

It was too dark to distinguish their faces, but Snyder felt sure that they were of the outlaw band.

Soon the sounds of their horses' feet died out in the cavern depths. The detective was thrilled with the force of a joyous conviction.

He felt sure now that he had discovered the underground exit.

He pictured the triumph over Coleman's malicious scheming. He made, no doubt, that the others had safely crossed on the fallen tree to the Cyclone. It would be an easy matter for him to find his way to the Cyclone with Enid.

It seemed to Snyder like a glorious victory. But how deceived he really was, time was to tell.

"Hurrah, Enid!" he cried, after the three outlaws had passed. "We are sure of escape now. Let us lose no time!"

"Oh, I am so glad!" cried Enid.

"In a very short time we shall be aboard the Cyclone, and safe from any harm that Carlos Coleman can do you or your sister Madge."

With this, Snyder again lit his torch, and they started to traverse the cavern. As they went on, it kept trending downward, until after a time they came out at the bottom of the canyon.

Daylight was dawning in the East, when after an arduous climb over rough boulders, they at length emerged from the gorge, and Snyder saw the steep side of the mountain before him.

He knew that another hour's hard climb must bring them to the spot where they had left the Cyclone. The detective had no doubt but that it was there yet, and that all were anxiously awaiting his coming.

Enid had not as yet complained of any exhaustion. Her joy at gaining her freedom, and the prospect of seeing her sister Madge, buoyed her up wonderfully.

Snyder assisted her over the hard places, and they chatted gayly as they went on.

A great surprise was in store for them, however.

Suddenly Snyder heard a sharp cry above him. He looked up and saw three men waving their arms excitedly.

They stood upon a spur of rock, and it did not require a second glance for Snyder to recognize them as Pomp, Barney and Dr. Vaneyke.

We left the three adventurers in rather a perilous predicament. After separating when pursued by the outlaws, as advised by Frank Reade, Jr., they had wandered about in the underbrush for hours, and finally by a remarkable coincidence all met at a point near the verge of the canyon.

Of course they did not know of Frank's capture by the outlaws. A discussion was held as to the best move to make.

Pomp was in favor of searching for Frank, Reade, Jr., but Barney demurred.

"Bogorra, lave Misther Frank alone for git-tin' off the island!" he cried. "Didn't he tell

us all to git back to the Cyclone the best way we could? Arrah! that's obeyin' orders. It's a safe bet that he's back there hisself long afore this toime."

"Barney is right," agreed Dr. Vaneyke. "If we go exploring around again we will be apt to fall into the hands of the enemy."

"That's right!" cried Barney.

Pomp yielded beneath this pressure. But the question now arose as to how they were to get off the island. It was a problem speedily settled.

Pomp foreseeing such an exigency as this had taken care to provide himself with another good lariat before leaving the Cyclone. This now came into good play.

The ducky adroitly made a cast and secured the noose about a crag on the opposite side of the gorge. Then securing the end in his hand to a tree, he proceeded to cross his improvised bridge with agility.

The others followed and had just effected the crossing when chancing to gaze down the mountain side Dr. Vaneyke had seen Snyder and Enid.

"By the planets!" he gasped. "There's the detective, and he has the girl with him."

This brought a cheer from Pomp and Barney. In a few moments Snyder and Enid had joined them.

Experiences were hastily exchanged and then the one query was raised:

"What of Frank Reade, Jr.?"

"Don't worry about him," said Dr. Vaneyke, positively. "He is likely on board the Cyclone now."

"I don't see how ebber Marse Frank gwine to git dar," demurred Pomp.

"He'd get there," asserted the doctor. "If he had to invent wings he'd get across that gorge where we couldn't."

"Then, let us go on to the Cyclone," cried Snyder.

With inspiration the others followed. It was not a long climb now and soon they were at the summit.

Now they had reached a point from which they should be able to view the Cyclone. There was the spot as all were willing to swear.

But the Cyclone was gone.

For a moment the startled quartette of men stood and gazed blankly at each other. What did it mean? All experienced a dread conviction that something was wrong and that harm had come to Frank Reade, Jr. Otherwise, he would certainly have kept his part of the arrangement.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE Foe OUTWITTED.

FRANK READE, JR., had a daring purpose in view when he promised Coleman that he would show him how to operate the Cyclone.

"I will spare your life," the outlaw declared, "if you will do that."

"Then the bargain is made," declared Frank, quietly. "Untie my hands."

Coleman drew his hunting knife and cut the thongs. Then he turned to the ten men who were with him and said:

"Now, men, stand in readiness to answer when I call you;" to Frank Reade, Jr., "at the first sign of treachery you are a dead man. See?"

Coleman held a revolver in his hand. The young inventor smiled ironically and said:

"That's all right. If you will come below, I will show you what I can of the machinery."

Entering the engine-room, Frank, at an unobserved moment, started the dynamos. Then he sprang to the wheel and the Cyclone began to glide smoothly away.

Frank set his course down the same path by which he had come. When the base of the mountain was reached there was a level strip across the valley and here the young inventor let the Cyclone out.

The outlaw's hair almost stood on end as the Cyclone raced over the plain.

"Whew!" he gasped. "This beats anything I ever experienced. Why you can beat a railroad train."

"Easily," replied Frank, quietly. "So you like the Cyclone, eh?"

"She's a dandy," cried the villain, exultantly.

"Now show me how I can work her myself."

Frank proceeded to describe but not accurately by any means the mechanism of the Cyclone.

But all the while his brain was busy.

Through the glass windows of the pilot-house he saw the outlaws on the deck. All were now

seated upon a bench made of plates of steel and which was an adjunct to the steel netting.

They were engaged busily in conversation. Frank smiled grimly.

He made a pretense of securing an article at the pilot-house door. Quick as a flash, he had connected a small wire with one of the supporting rods of the netting which connected with the steel bench.

"Now, sir," he said to Coleman, as he placed his hand upon a small grip lever near the wheel. "I will show you how to stop the Cyclone. Place your hand upon this grip and turn it. It will take strength."

Frank removed his grasp. The outlaw could suspect nothing, for Frank had just handled the grip lever himself. He did not see that the famous inventor's other hand was near a small push-button.

Coleman took hold of the grip and tried to turn it. It would not yield.

This was Frank's chance.

"You have a weak wrist," he said, coolly.

"Take both hands."

"I ought to have a stronger grip than you," growled the outlaw.

With a curse, he placed both hands upon the grip lever. Frank Reade, Jr.'s moment had come.

Quick as a flash, he pushed down the electric button. With a convulsion, the villain leaped in the air, and tried to remove his hands from the lever. But he was held as by a hundred giants.

Too late he saw the trick. Curses, shrieks and yells of pain poured from his lips. Then a thought occurred to him.

"Pierre, Miguel, Juan, help!" he yelled to his men on the deck. "Quick! kill the devilish wizard!"

But Frank Reade, Jr., had been prepared for this. The very instant that he had charged the grip lever, he had touched another button, and the fearful force of the dynamos was thrown into the steel rod connecting with the seat upon which the outlaws sat.

The result was terrific.

Every one of them was stunned into insensibility, and, hurled from the bench, lay like a pile of corpses upon the deck.

They were quite unable to go to the aid of their chief. Frank Reade, Jr., was once more the victor.

But the young inventor did not pause to exult over his triumph. He hastily shut the current from the netting, and then opened the door in the netting.

The Cyclone had been brought to a stop. Frank hastily dragged each one of the unconscious outlaws to the door and dropped them unceremoniously out upon the hard prairie.

Then he closed the door and went back to the engine-room. He picked up a rope and returned to the pilot-house.

"I surrender! I cave!" yelled the agonized Coleman. "Only take my hands off this cursed thing. I shall die! I shall die!"

"Oh, I guess not," said Frank, ironically, as he bound the villain's wrists. Then he shut off the current. Released from the electric grip, Coleman sank exhausted to the floor.

Frank, believing his prisoner *hors du combat* sprang to the wheel. The Cyclone was started on the return to the mountain, and Frank was regulating the wheel when a startling turning of tables occurred.

With his back turned to Coleman, he did not see that the villain had in some manner quickly loosed the rope about his wrists.

He had no warning until with a tigerish cry, Coleman leaped upon him and bore him to the floor. As they fell, the outlaw's fingers gripped Frank's wind-pipe.

"Curse ye! it's your life I'll have this time," gritted the brute with murderous intent.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ONCE MORE UNITED.

FRANK READE, JR., had no time whatever to prepare for the unexpected onslaught of Coleman. Consequently the outlaw had a great advantage in the first of the struggle.

But the great inventor knew that his life was in the balance, and made a mighty effort to overcome his foe's grasp.

Over and over they rolled upon the floor of the pilot-house.

All this while the Cyclone was flying across the plain with no guiding hand at the wheel. If it had not fortunately been a clear level course the result might have been disastrous in the extreme.



As it was, the Cyclone was momentarily tearing the mountain wall and a collision, which would demolish the machine would certainly ensue if immediate steps were not taken to check the engines.

Frank Reade, Jr., was well aware of this threatened peril, and he therefore exerted his utmost strength to terminate the contest.

But Coleman had got a grip which he could not break, and the famous inventor was constrained to appeal to the outlaw's good sense.

"Give in, Coleman," he said, sternly. "Both of our lives are in danger. The Cyclone is running wild!"

"Let her rip!" gritted the outlaw, savagely. "I can stand it if you can."

"You might as well yield," declared Frank, "for it will avail you nothing to overcome me. You could not stop the Cyclone, and we shall dash into the mountain with such force as to kill us both."

But Coleman was reckless and only replied with a jeering laugh.

"That trick won't work. Frank Reade, Jr., you are crafty, but you can't fool me. I mean to make you my prisoner again. You will be glad to stop the Cyclone to save your own life."

Frank saw that it was of no use to argue with the fellow, so he renewed the contest, bending every energy to win.

Fortune favored the great inventor. By a mere chance he gained a foothold on the door-sill, and bracing himself against the frame, he was enabled to break Coleman's deadly grip.

The contest speedily assumed a different aspect.

Frank had now got upon even terms with his foe, and the result was that he quickly threw him upon the floor of the pilot-house. In falling Coleman's head struck against an iron rail, and he was stunned into helplessness.

Frank Reade, Jr., seized his opportunity and sprang to the electric lever. In an instant he had shut off the current and applied the electric brake.

The Cyclone came to almost an instant halt. It was a wonderfully quick stop, but none too quick, for they were not ten yards from a mighty heap of boulders at the very entrance to the canyon.

It required Frank's attention for a moment at the brakes. It was but a brief spell of time, but yet sufficient for a thrilling incident to occur.

The villain Coleman had almost instantly regained his senses. His quick eye and ready faculties took in the situation at a glance and decided him upon a daring plan of action.

His effort to get control of the Cyclone had proved a failure.

He had no desire to remain aboard of it as a prisoner. He saw an avenue of escape and accepted it.

Had Frank Reade, Jr., for a moment suspected his purpose he could have made quick action to frustrate it. But it all happened in the twinkling of an eye.

Frank turned to see the outlaw flitting across the deck and through the steel door in the netting, which had been left open. The great inventor seized a revolver and shouted:

"Come back! I will shoot you like a dog if you don't come back!"

But Coleman did not pause. He cleared the door at a bound. Frank's pistol exploded, but the bullet went wild. The next moment, with a ringing yell of mocking triumph, the villain cleared the pile of boulders and vanished in the canyon.

It was useless to attempt pursuit. Frank knew this, so he remained aboard the Cyclone. In one sense, he had gained a victory over the foe.

He had rescued the Cyclone from the vandal hands of the outlaws. But his next thought was of his companions and what was their fate.

He was in a quandary as to what move it was now best to make, when he heard the rattle of firearms up the mountain side.

Glancing up, Frank saw a thrilling sight. Down the mountain, retreating and firing at a pursuing half score of outlaws, was the little party, including Pomp and Barney, Dr. Vaneyke, Snyder and Enid. They were just in the act of leaving the spot where they had expected to find the Cyclone, and met with disappointment, when they were attacked by a number of Coleman's gang.

At this moment they came in sight of the Cyclone. Frank stepped forward of the pilot-house, and waved a small flag.

As they saw and recognized him a cheer of

joy went up from the lips of all. They broke into a run toward the Cyclone.

Frank saw that they were in imminent danger of being shot down by their pursuers, so he stepped into the forward cabin and trained the electric gun up the mountain side.

The result was terrific. The electric bolt struck the mountain a hundred yards in advance of the outlaws.

Frank did not intend to kill them. He merely desired to give them a fright and he succeeded.

For a moment there was a tornado of flying earth, stones and debris in that vicinity. When the air had cleared the outlaws could be seen far up the mountain side running for their lives.

The next moment the Cyclone's party reached the gangway where Frank Reade, Jr., met them.

It was a scene of joy and triumph and none were more elated than Snyder, the detective. He had indeed effected the rescue of Enid Weston, but now the question was asked:

"Where is Madge?"

Frank Reade was the only one who could answer the query. He was quite sure that Madge had been taken to the outlaw's stronghold on the canyon island. This was a dampening reflection.

The spirits of all were in a sensible degree depressed with this conclusion.

"Well," said Dr. Vaneyke, sententially, "I cannot see then that we have any reasons whatever for congratulating ourselves. We have merely been transferred from the frying pan into the fire."

"Correct, doctor," agreed Frank Reade, Jr. "We have exchanged Madge for Enid."

"Then really we have been at a standstill and are now just at the point we started from."

"Exactly, if we are not indeed worse off. The villain Coleman really wanted Madge instead of Enid all the while."

"Oh, Madge!" cried Enid, bursting into tears of despair and grief. "Better had I remained the prisoner of Black Carlos."

"Cheer up, little one," cried Snyder, encouragingly. "We will pledge ourselves to rescue your sister."

"Oh, sir, is that true?" exclaimed Enid, turning to Frank Reade, Jr.

"The Cyclone shall never be headed for home until the villain Coleman has expiated his crimes in a fitting manner," the great inventor declared, firmly. "Your sister shall be saved, if it is in my power."

"Oh, sir, God will bless you for your kindness," cried Enid, fulsomely.

But before she could say more a terrible warning cry came from Barney, who was in the pilot-house.

"Och, Mither Frank, it's kilt we are, on-toirely. The blatherskites have turned the mountain down upon us."

A tremendous explosion had suddenly rent the air far up the heights, and now, to the horror of all, the whole mountain side seemed to be moving with lightning rapidity down upon the Cyclone, to bury it from sight forever.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE LANDSLIDE.

THE outlaws had taken advantage of the peculiar formation of the mountain wall to turn a fearful wave of destruction down upon the dreaded Electric Cyclone. It was a moment of the most supreme peril.

At this point the vast ledge-like formation of the mountain hung over the valley, and the growth of sycamores and birches for several hundred yards up its side were rooted in the loosest of soil, all of which seemed to find a brace, as it were, against a single spur of the mountain side.

The trick of the outlaws had been to blow up this supporting spur of rock with the keg of gunpowder.

Naturally enough, the whole earth formation gave way from the force of its own weight and made a virtual landslide, leaving a track of smooth ledge behind.

The trick was by no means a hastily prepared one. The outlaws had doubtless long before recognized the importance of this trap for an assailing foe, and had had it all in readiness.

Down the mountain side the landslide was coming with terrific force. It would seem as if no earthly power could save the Cyclone from destruction.

There was not time to reverse the electric engines and run back out of the way. For one

brief second those on board the Cyclone were petrified with horror.

"De debbil!" gasped Pomp. "We's gone for now."

"We are lost!" groaned Dr. Vaneyke.

The others could not speak. But Frank Reade, Jr., made sudden and determined action.

He sprang to the forward cabin and into the gun chamber. In an instant he had sighted the electric gun and discharged it.

The lightning bolt met the oncoming landslide. For a moment the air was filled for a hundred feet in height with flying stones, earth and shattered trees. Again the young inventor fired an electric bolt at the same spot and again.

It was the *dernier ressort*, the only chance for salvation.

Frank had calculated rightly upon the effect of the shots. Striking the oncoming mass the electric bolts had piled up a heap of debris which towered fifty feet in height from the mountain side, and this obstruction split the landslide.

To the right and left flowed the mighty sea of earth and stones, but the barrier raised by the electric bolts stood firm.

To be sure the Cyclone was hub deep in loose dirt, but this did no material injury. Only the incalculable force of the awful electric lightning bolts had saved the day. It looked like the mighty work of a Jove more than the accomplishment of human power.

In a less space of time than one would reckon upon, the affair was over.

When Frank Reade, Jr., came out of the gun-room, he was pallid and limp from the effects of the fearful strain upon his nerves.

The others greeted him with a wild cheer.

"You have saved our lives and the Cyclone from destruction!" cried Dr. Vaneyke. "However did you have the presence of mind to act as you did?"

"Shure, Mither Frank, it's buried aloive we'd all be but for ye!" cried Barney.

"Golly sakes! dis nig done tink him time am come," rejoined Pomp, excitedly.

Frank was overwhelmed, but with an effort managed to keep upon his feet.

"I knew that it was the only thing that could be done," he said, modestly. "If it had failed—"

All shuddered. Instinctively they gazed up at the towering wreck above them. It seemed to be tottering and Frank sprang to the engine-room crying:

"Stand by the wheel, Pomp! We've got to get out of here pretty quick. The danger is not over yet."

But the wheels of the Cyclone were firm in the debris, which was up to the hubs. Frank saw that it would be a needless strain upon the shaft to endeavor to start the engines.

So Snyder and Barney sprang out with shovels and soon cleared the dirt away from about the spokes of the wheels. The Cyclone then beneath powerful pressure forced its way out of the wreck.

Beyond a few bruises and dents in the netting from falling stones the Cyclone was not injured. As it glided out upon the prairie a baffled yell came from the mountain side.

There, plainly visible, was Coleman and twenty or more of his gang.

The temptation was upon Frank to annihilate them. He sprang to the electric gun, but before he could bring it to bear upon them they had vanished.

Frank Reade, Jr., returned to the deck and a consultation was held. The situation was not one of the most encouraging sort.

As matters stood now Black Carlos seemed to have decidedly the best of it. But Frank Reade, Jr., was never more determined in his life to win the battle.

"Madge Weston must be saved!" he declared, firmly. "At any cost she must and shall be rescued!"

"Oh! save Madge, I pray you," cried Enid, clasping her hands in an appealing way. "Save my sister!"

"That we will, my child," said Dr. Vaneyke, reassuringly. "Keep up good courage. Do not lose heart."

"Begorra, I wish ye'd let me go out alone, Mither Frank," cried Barney. "I'll bate me loife I'll rescue the leddy, or there'll be a dead Mick afore another day."

"Shoo dar, I'ish!" cried Pomp, contemptuously. "Yo' don' kno' nuffin' 'bout a rescue. Yo' jes' lemme go, Marse Frank. I kin show dat 'fishman dat he amn't in it."

"Bejabers, don't ye give me anny av yura



lip, naygur," threatened Barney, with a show of pugnacity. "I don't allow anny such misfit baboons as yez to insult me."

"Huh! Yo' can't hurt noboddy. I ain't 'fraid ob yo' 'fiah. Yo' am de po'est bit ob white trash I eber did know. Yo' better go back to Ireland, yo' had. Mebbe yo' could set her free."

"Be the powers, if I had me rights, I'd moighty soon do that," cried Barney, grandiloquently. "The O'Sheas are the lineal descendants av the ould Oirish kings, an' it's proud I am av me name."

"Shoo dar! what good am dat to yo' now, I'd like to know?"

"Shure, an' ain't a man the roight to be proud av his ancestry? Phwat about yures? Bejabers, it's loikely yure great grandfather was a big monkey, swingin' around on the trees by his tail. It's a moighty hard time yez wud have getting into foine society with such a tail as that to yure family history, naygur. Whurrool don't yez talk to a dacint Irish gintleman loike Misther Barney O'Shea."

And Barney thrust his hands in his pockets and strolled up and down the deck with his nose in the air at an angle of forty-five degrees. Poor Pomp was quite sat upon.

Little Enid laughed merrily at this comical set-to between the two faithful fellows. But Frank Reade, Jr., interrupted the farce.

"There is only one way to trick the enemy," he declared. "We must invade the enemy's stronghold with the Cyclone."

"With the Cyclone?" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke.

"Yes."

"Can that be done?"

"I think so. I think the Cyclone can pass through the cavern by which the top of the canyon island is reached. If so we can compel them to surrender."

"That is a great plan."

"I think so. At least, it will never do for us to divide forces again and leave the Cyclone. We came near losing our lives and everything else by that venture. Our only way is to follow with the Cyclone."

"Right!" agreed Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder in the same breath.

But before another word could be spoken a startled cry from Barney who was in the pilot-house attracted the attention of all. The next moment a great surprise was in order.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A TREACHEROUS DECOY.

BARNEY, while in the pilot-house, had chanced to glance up the mountain side, and to his surprise saw a man advancing boldly toward the Cyclone, carrying in his right hand a stick upon which was tied a white handkerchief.

It was a flag of truce, of course, and Barney refrained from picking the fellow off with his rifle.

He gave the shout which attracted the attention of the others. Some excitement was the result.

Frank Reade, Jr., went to the door in the steel netting and opened it.

The bearer of the truce paused a few hundred yards distant, and waved the white handkerchief. Frank drew a similar one from his pocket, and answered the signal.

Then the truce bearer advanced within speaking distance.

That he was one of the outlaws could be seen from his personal appearance. He made a salute, and spoke:

"Can I speak with Mr. Frank Reade, Jr.?"

"I am that person," replied Frank, quickly.

"What do you want?"

"I have a message from Carlos Coleman," replied the truce bearer.

"What is it?"

"He sends you greeting, and desires to state that he is mortally wounded. He asks for terms of surrender."

This statement was an astonishing one. All on board the Cyclone experienced a thrill. Frank replied, coolly:

"I thought he would come to his senses. My terms are, the surrender of the young lady, Madge Weston, and a solemn promise that he will cease to persecute her further."

"Ah! upon that condition you will spare the lives of his men?"

"Surrender Madge Weston to me alive and uninjured, and I will turn the Cyclone's head homeward," declared Frank.

The truce bearer was silent a moment.

"I think he will accept those terms," he

finally said. "He merely wishes you to spare his men. He will likely die himself."

"Very well," rejoined Frank. "Convey to him the intimation that I am in haste and that the young lady must be delivered up immediately."

"Y-e-s," said the truce bearer, hesitatingly. "But he desired me to ask you to come to him. He has something to say to you before he dies."

"Where is he?" asked Frank.

"Not more than a mile over on that side of the mountain," replied the truce bearer, eagerly.

"Can the Cyclone run over there?"

"There is a smooth course all the way. I will go ahead and show you the way."

"All right," agreed Frank. "Come aboard and I will go over there at once."

But the outlaw shrank back with a shrug of his shoulders.

"No," he replied. "I will walk."

"Why not ride?"

"I don't care to. I wouldn't trust myself aboard that concern for a fortune. Oh, no. I will walk."

And this he insisted upon. No argument was of any avail.

"All right!" cried Frank, finally. "You go ahead and we will follow."

He sprang aboard the Cyclone.

"Ah, gentlemen!" he cried, triumphantly, as he met the questioning gaze of all. "We have gained the ends of our expedition. The foe is dying and has capitulated. In a very short time, Miss Enid, you and your sister will be united again, and your enemy can never do you any more harm."

The joy of Enid was beyond description. Pomp and Barney started to dance a jig, but Frank waved them to the pilot-house, saying:

"Start the Cyclone slowly. Follow the guide."

Pomp went to the wheel, and Barney started the dynamos. In a moment the Cyclone was following the outlaw guide over the hill.

For some ways the guide led the way. Then suddenly he halted near the face of a cliff. Up this a narrow, faintly defined path led.

The outlaw guide pointed up this and said:

"We must go the rest of the way on foot. The Cyclone cannot go up there."

Frank Reade, Jr., opened the door in the steel netting and descended the gangway stairs. Not until he had actually set his foot upon the cliff path did any suspicion of possible treachery dawn upon him.

Then he started back as if stung. A great wave of comprehension swept over him and quick as a flash he whipped out a revolver and covered the guide.

"Hands up!" he cried, sternly.

The outlaw turned white as a sheet. He complied at once.

"Don't shoot!" he cried, imploringly. "Spare my life!"

"Spare you!" repeated the young inventor, in a voice of steel. "Why, you miserable falsifier, I have found out your treacherous game. You are leading me into a trap."

The fellow's teeth chattered like castanets. Frank read the truth in his face at a glance.

"No, no!" he protested, feebly. "It is not so, I assure you."

"It is a clever game but it won't work," gritted Frank.

"I assure you," began the guide.

"Hold!" said Frank, affecting a blood-thirsty expression. "I can read your mind through and through. Tell me where your master is now, or I will tie you to the muzzle of that electric gun and blow you into perdition."

A wall of terror escaped the villain. He sank upon his knees.

"Oh, spare me! Spare me!" he whined. "I will do anything you ask."

"Then tell me!" demanded Frank, sternly.

"Where is your master?"

"He is over the cliff there."

"Then he sent you down under cover of a flag of truce really to decoy me into a trap?"

The trembling wretch nodded his head.

Frank laughed scornfully. He replaced his revolver in his belt.

"Go back to Carlos Coleman," he said, contemptuously, "and tell him that he will have to employ other means to get me into his clutches. Now, get up and get!"

The treacherous truce bearer needed no other adjuration. He started full speed up on the mountain path.

Frank Reade, Jr., with an expression of fierce resolution upon his face, returned to the Cyclone's deck.

"There must be no further trifling!" he de-

clared, grimly. "On to the canyon, Pomp. We will rescue Madge now or sacrifice the Cyclone."

The famous inventor's orders were instantly obeyed. The Cyclone quickly ran back to the canyon.

Entering this, after some little search the entrance to the cavern or upward passage to the island above was found. To the gratification of all, it was found that the Cyclone could easily make its way through the cavern.

The search-light was turned on and the cavern arches lit up. Without any difficulty the Cyclone followed the upward windings of the passage.

Had Frank Reade, Jr., paused a moment to consider one startling possibility, he would never have entered the cavern with the Cyclone. But in his eagerness to invade the stronghold, he naturally overlooked a mighty risk.

The Cyclone was making rapid progress upward when the startling climax came. Suddenly a muffled, thunderous explosion occurred far ahead of them. The ground trembled, and great quantities of dirt and stone from the cavern roof descended upon the Cyclone. The shock was quickly followed by another one in the rear. There was not one soul on board the Cyclone but comprehended the awful calamity which had descended upon them.

"My God!" gasped Frank Reade, Jr., "we are lost! The outlaws have closed up the mouth of the passage with those explosions! Why did I not think of that possibility! Probably many hundred feet of earth are between us and daylight now. We are buried alive!"

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### IMPRISONED UNDERGROUND.

FRANK READE, JR.'S words fell upon the ears of all like the knell of doom. It was a most horrifying reflection.

Buried alive! The very words implied the most horrible of suggestions, the most hopeless of thoughts. That such was the case there was not the least particle of doubt.

The two explosions and the effect upon the walls and roof of the cavern told the story.

It was an easy matter for the outlaws to close the entrance and exit of the cavern by means of a couple of barrels of gunpowder. This had certainly been their game.

Dr. Vaneyke was the coolest person on board the Cyclone. Snyder, the detective, was fearfully excited.

"There must be some way of escape," he cried. "We must not give up to this fate. Can you not blow our way out with your electric gun, Mr. Reade?"

"I think not," said Frank, shaking his head. "The shock might impact us in a solid cave-in. The situation is dubious."

"We are lost!" groaned Snyder.

"It certainly looks as if the enemy have the best of us," declared Dr. Vaneyke.

"Golly, Marse Frank!" cried Pomp, "I done reckon we kin dig our way out ob dis yere place. Jes' you gib dis chile a good shobel!"

"Begorra, thrust me fer that, too!" cried Barney, eagerly. "An Irishman can bate a naygur at shoveling any day!"

"Well," said Frank, arousing himself, "we will try the scheme. At least we will go on as far as we can. Fortunately, we have provisions for quite an extended period."

"Wait a moment," said Dr. Vaneyke, quietly. "Let me examine the walls of this cavern. I would like to ascertain the stratum."

The scientist descended from the Cyclone and examined the cavern walls. When he returned he said, quietly:

"The deposit in this drift is of the tertiary period. It is my impression that the upper part of this cavern will furnish good digging. In that case we may be able to get out ourselves, even if we don't get the Cyclone out."

"That is encouraging," said Frank, cheerfully. "Let her go ahead, Barney."

The Celt obeyed the injunction, and the Cyclone moved forward. For some way no obstruction was met; then they came to a dead wall of earth, which completely blocked the cavern.

There was no way of estimating how far it was to the outer air. It might be several hundred feet, in which case it might take weeks to dig the way out.

There was a good likelihood of our adventurers tunneling a way out for themselves, but it seemed as if the Cyclone was doomed for perpetual imprisonment.

But here Dr. Vaneyke's scientific knowledge



again came into play. He alighted from the Cyclone and made another examination of the cavern walls.

For some time he studied the character of the soil, and finally declared:

"We cannot be more than twenty feet from the surface, for this drift is of the glacial epoch."

"Hurrah!" cried Snyder, wildly. "That is nothing. Only twenty feet of soft earth. Give me a pick and shovel. Come, Barney and Pomp, we'll dig our way to daylight in a few hours."

The words were inspiring. All at once caught the spirit, and even Enid wanted to take a shovel and help.

The entombed quartette of men went to work diligently. Frank Reade, Jr., himself handled a shovel with the deftness of a veteran.

The first plan was to make a tunnel to daylight, if possible. Then the feasibility of digging the Cyclone out could be estimated.

For hours, with the glare of the search-light to aid them, they worked like beavers. It is not an enormous job, as any one knows, to tunnel through twenty feet of earth. In less than three hours half the distance had been covered.

After eight hours of steady work Pomp's shovel went through the last layer of earth. With a cheer all began to dig until the opening was large enough to permit them to crawl into the open air.

Dr. Vaneyke's prediction had come out right. There was hardly twenty feet of the cave-in.

The first act of the underground prisoners was to look out for the enemy. But not an outlaw was in sight.

The vicinity showed the terrific force of the explosion which had closed the cavern's mouth. Huge boulders, weighing tons, were hurled about in every direction.

"Now we have dug ourselves out," cried Snyder, "let's all take hold with a will and dig the Cyclone out."

But a sharp exclamation escaped Dr. Vaneyke's lips.

"Hold on!" he said, coolly. "It may not be necessary to dig the Cyclone out at this end of the cavern."

All heard this with amazement.

"What do you mean, doctor?" asked Frank. The scientist replied by holding up a bit of paper in the tunnel.

"Do you see that?" he cried. "It wavers and bends. There is a draught in this cavern, and as usual, it comes from below. That is fair evidence of an opening down there."

Frank caught the idea.

"You would intimate that the attempt to close the lower entrance was a failure?" he cried.

"Exactly!" replied the scientist.

"If that is the case," cried Frank, "we had better accept the avenue of escape which involves the least work."

"Then we are to go back?" asked Snyder, disappointedly.

"By no means as yet. We are here, and let us first reconnoiter. Maybe we can surprise the foe."

This settled matters to the satisfaction of all. Dr. Vaneyke agreed to remain with the Cyclone and Enid. Pomp and Barney, Snyder and Frank set out on the reconnoitering tour.

To their surprise they speedily found that the stronghold had been deserted. Not an outlaw was on the canyon island. It was an astounding discovery.

The hut where Madge had been confined was empty. The outlaws were gone, and had left little of value behind them.

Their footsteps were tracked to an impromptu draw-bridge which had been reconstructed. By this time they were probably many miles from the place.

Nobody was more disappointed than Snyder. "That is a clever trick!" he declared. "I wonder if we shall be able to find their next rendezvous?"

"They have gone and taken Madge with them," said Frank Reade, Jr. "Well, the best thing we can do then is to return to the Cyclone and endeavor to pursue the villains again."

This was the order, and at once a return was hastily made to the Cyclone.

In view of Dr. Vaneyke's theory that the lower end of the cavern was open, it was decided to ascertain first if escape in that direction was not the most feasible.

Accordingly, all boarded the Cyclone, the search-light was reversed, and the descent began. Piles of earth and debris were encountered, but the Cyclone passed over these all

safely and soon had reached the lower end of the cavern.

To the joy of all daylight was seen ahead. Then as the search-light's rays flooded the spot it was seen that the mouth of the cavern was blocked with huge piles of bowlders of various sizes.

Of course this made a stronger barrier than dirt, but the cave was only partly obstructed.

"Oh, if I could only use the electric-gun!" cried Frank Reade, Jr. "I would blow those rocks to powder and we would very soon be at liberty."

"And why not use it, Frank?" asked Dr. Vaneyke, coolly.

"The shock would cause another cave-in," replied Frank. "We would be buried in it."

"By no means," declared the scientist. "This cavern at this spot is a solid ledge which no shock of reverberation could shatter. There is no reason why the Cyclone should not blow her way literally out of this place."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### IN PURSUIT.

This statement of Dr. Vaneyke's was perfectly correct.

"Then, you have examined the cavern walls here?" cried Frank.

"I have."

"Hurrah!" cried the world famous inventor. "We shall soon be at liberty to pursue the outlaws once more."

Without a moment's hesitation, Frank Reade, Jr., sprang down into the gun-room. He knew well the force of the dynamite projectiles. The strongest wall of masonry or bowlders could be battered down with ease.

It was but a moment's work to train the electric gun upon the obstruction. The Cyclone was run back a safe distance into the cavern and then Frank discharged the gun.

With thunderous force the bowlders were split and cracked and crumbled into dust along the path of the projectile. Quite a breach was made by the single discharge.

Again and again the electric gun poured its fearful volleys into the obstruction. The bowlders were hurled far out into the canyon and the barrier literally battered down.

Within thirty minutes from the first shot a pathway was made for the Cyclone to pass in safety out into the canyon. A wild cheer went up from the throats of all on board the Cyclone.

Pomp was at the wheel and Barney in the engine-room. The Cyclone ran swiftly out of the canyon and was soon on the plain outside. Here a halt was called.

It was now a question of puzzling sort as to what move it was best to make.

The outlaws had certainly decamped, bag and baggage. What direction they had taken was a question not easily answered. It was imperative that this should be immediately learned, however.

Frank Reade, Jr., was in a quandary.

"What shall we do?" he asked of Dr. Vaneyke. "You have helped us out of many a tough problem, doctor."

"Well," replied the scientist, deliberately, "judging from the formation of this valley, there would seem to be but two avenues by which it can be vacated with any degree of ease. Those are, the pass by which we entered and a path which you may see by looking to the north-west."

"Exactly!" replied Frank, eagerly. "It is by no means likely that Coleman has remained in the valley."

"No."

"Then he must have made his exit by one or the other of those passes?"

"Exactly, unless there is some secret method of leaving the valley. Of course, one could climb over the mountain wall but not on horseback."

"You are right, doctor."

"We had ought to be able to find the trail in one pass or the other."

The scientist had again helped remove a serious obstacle in the path of the rescuers. Frank at once gave orders to run the Cyclone for the north-west pass. In a few moments they were spinning over level ground for that destination.

They crossed the valley quickly, and then skirting the base of a high mountain, came to the mouth of the pass.

It was high-walled and deep, but fortunately was not obstructed by bowlders. Its bottom was as smooth as a polished floor, owing to the action of water which flowed through it in time of storm.

But while this was favorable to the passage

of the Cyclone, it had its disadvantage in the fact that the trail of the outlaws could not be deciphered.

Here was a dampening realization. What was to be done?

Frank Reade, Jr., however, ordered Barney and Pomp to run the Cyclone through the passage. This was done, and after a run of a mile or more over the rocky floor of the pass, a wonderful view was spread out before them.

A mighty plain, as level as a floor, extended as far as the eye could reach. The only object which seemed to break its sameness was a lake of some miles in diameter.

Frank Reade, Jr., stood on the Cyclone's deck and studied the distant panorama with a glass.

There was a faint hope uppermost in his breast that he could see the fleeing outlaws. But not a living being was in sight, save a herd of buffalo far to the north.

The Cyclone emerged from the pass. As they came now to the prairie soil, it was decided to stop and search for the trail.

All except Dr. Vaneyke and Enid left the Cyclone and began to examine the ground. For some time a most assiduous search was made.

Then Barney suddenly gave a sharp cry.

"Whurrool! Bad cess to the omadhouns! Phwat's this but the futprints av the divils thimselves, or rayther, their hosses'. Wud yez come here, Misther Frank, and luk at thim?"

In a moment Frank was by Barney's side. There was the trail fast enough.

In the soft soil the horses' hoof-prints were quite plain. It was a cheering reflection that the trail had been found.

It trended to the westward and directly across the plain. All returned to the Cyclone, and Frank directed Pomp to hold the Cyclone's head to the west.

"Have you any idea, Mr. Reade, as to where the outlaws will fetch up?" asked the detective, Snyder, as he joined Frank.

"I have a faint inkling as to the existence of another stronghold somewhere in the western part of No Man's Land," replied the great inventor. "At least, I shall explore for it in that direction."

"Ah! do you know of another range of hills in that region?"

"No, but there is, I am informed, an immense swamp, which is almost impassable, being mostly quicksand and mire. I believe that Coleman will make that his next abiding place."

"Jupiter!" gasped the detective, in dismay. "The Cyclone can hardly invade that spot. They will stand us off there."

"We will find a way to dig them out," declared Frank, confidently. "If it be to the South Pole, I shall follow Coleman."

The plain was so level and smooth that the Cyclone was enabled to develop great speed. Mile after mile was sped over until the range of hills that they had just left had faded out of sight in their rear.

All about them was one vast level expanse. It was a wonderful spectacle, and save for the green turf close cropped by the buffalo and wandering droves of stock, might have compared with the Great Desert of Asia.

Enid sat upon deck and enjoyed the invigorating breeze. Dr. Vaneyke was constantly in her company, and in his paternal way did much to lighten the young girl's mind of its burden of doubt and sorrow.

As Pomp had to prepare the evening meal Frank Reade, Jr., relieved him at the wheel. Barney was busy in the engine room and as Pomp went by on his way to his cooking galley he saw what he believed was a prime opportunity to give Barney a good dig.

The stairs leading up from the engine room were of steel. Near them was a wire which connected with the search-light. Not more than a foot of this wire was exposed and it was protected by a wooden guard.

Pomp saw that the wire was quivering with the full force of the electric current though the search-light was not turned on. This had suggested the trick to him.

He carried with him an insulated glove for the purpose of safely handling the live wires in the engine-room. This he put on and then drew from his pocket a small piece of wire.

Leaning down through the hatchway at an unobserved moment he twisted the bit of wire about the live wire and then connected it with the steel rail of the stairway. Thus the electric current was diverted into the stairs.

Then with a jubilant feeling Pomp drew himself up.

"Ki yi, yo! I'ishman down dar!" he yelled.



"Yo's a big stuff, an' darsn't come up yer. I kin break yo' head fo' yo'!"

The astonished Celt in the engine-room turned quick as a flash. There was a surprise in store for Barney.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### THE PRAIRIE RANCH.

Of course Pomp felt perfectly safe in black-guarding Barney at that moment. In fact, he did not stint himself in the amount of abuse he heaped upon the Irishman.

"G'long dar, yo' po' white trash!" he cried, with a grimace. "Yo' am no good. Jes' yo' dare show yo'self on deck, an' I'll pound yo' ugly face off fo' yo'!"

For a moment Barney was so astounded at the African's temerity that he hardly knew what to do or say.

Then, as Pomp continued to heap epithets upon him, his Irish blood rose up. He advanced to the foot of the stairway.

"Phwat's that yez are sayin', naygur?" he shouted. "Begorra, I'll come up thar and sphoil ye face for yez if yez say them things agin!"

"Huh! Yo' jes' don' dar' to do dat," retorted Pomp, tauntingly. "Jes' yo' try it, yo' old fish bog-trotter. Ya, ya!"

This was too much for Barney. He threw off his coat.

"Say dat agin, naygur!" he roared.

"Old fish bog-trotter. Ya, ya!"

Barney made a dash for the stairs. He leaped upon them with full force. The effect was tremendous.

He was picked up and thrown across the engine-room with the force of a catapult. When he picked himself up he looked like a total wreck. He was doubled up like one afflicted with cramps, and he danced about like one in the state of delirium tremens.

As for Pomp, he was so convulsed with jubilant laughter that he just rolled over upon the deck and whooped. It was the sounds of his merriment that aroused Barney to fresh action.

The Celt was, of course, not seriously injured by the shock, which is only stunning in its effects. After recovering from the first spasms he was himself again, and cautiously approached the stairs.

He was boiling over with wrath and a mad desire to get at the perpetrator of the practical joke. Yet he did not venture to try the passage of the stairs again.

He knew that the stairs were in some way connected with the dynamos, and also that Pomp was the cause of it.

There was no other way for him to get upon deck. Until he could remove the connection he was imprisoned.

It was Pomp's advantage now. He returned to the attack with derisive shouts of laughter.

"Huh! Yo's a smaht fishman, yo' is!" he cried, tauntingly. "Why didn't yo' come up dem stairs? Yes, jes' yo' try it once more! Yo's a no-good old stuff! I jes' dar' yo' to come up yer! Yes, I does!"

Then Pomp went off into laughter. The effect of this upon one of Barney's fiery temperament can be imagined.

He could with difficulty restrain himself.

"Be the harp of Tara!" he cried, furiously. "It's a different shmoile yez will have on yure face whin I do get up there, me foiné baboon! I can see yure thrick."

By chance Barney's gaze lit upon the wire which made the connection with the staircase. It was but a moment's work for him to close a valve and shut the current from the searchlight wire. This discharged the current from the stairs and the infuriated son of Erin went tearing up them to the desk.

A lively scrimmage would have ensued had Pomp stood his ground. But the wily African was too shrewd for this.

He beat a hasty retreat. Into the galley he went. A steel door was provided to this. He closed it and Barney was unable to reach him.

The baffled Celt, however, indulged in a torrent of personal abuse from his position on the other side of the door. Pomp serenely went on about his cooking, ignoring it all. This time the colored gentleman had the best of the argument certainly.

It is likely that Barney would not have raised his siege at the door for some time had it not been for an incident. A loud shout was heard upon deck, and then a bell tinkled in the engine-room.

This meant to shut off the dynamos, and Barney went back to his post in the quickest way.

The Cyclone came to a halt. Frank Reade, Jr., sprang out of the pilot-house and met Snyder, who was very excited, and who had given the shout which caused Frank to stop the Cyclone.

"Well, Mr. Snyder, what is it?" asked Frank, quickly.

The detective tendered him his glass and cried:

"Just take a look to the southward. I think I can see some sort of a building, and a party of horsemen."

"Indeed!"

"I have a fancy they may be a part of Coleman's gang. Just take a squint at them."

Frank Reade, Jr., needed no second bidding. He turned the glass in the direction indicated. What seemed a mere speck to the naked eye, through the glass, was revealed as really a building of some sort, and a group of horsemen before it.

"You are right," declared Frank. "I believe it is a stock ranch."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Snyder, in disappointment. "I had hoped it was Coleman's gang."

"At least, it will pay us to visit the ranch!" cried Frank. "We may be able to learn definitely just where Coleman's new stronghold is."

All agreed that this would be a wise plan. The Cyclone was headed for the distant ranch at once.

After a rapid run the Cyclone came within easy hailing distance of what was now revealed as a long, low-roofed building, or typical ranch. Lounging about the low piazza, or on horseback, about the place were a score or more of genuine cowboys. Their Mexican hats, ranchero suits and long hair, was plain evidence of their occupation.

But the cattle which they should be herding or rounding up were not in sight. It might be reasonably presumed, however, that they were not far away out on the range.

At any rate, Frank Reade, Jr., had no suspicion that these men were other than cowboys. In that case they could be safely counted upon as allies against the outlaws.

The appearance of the Cyclone created a genuine sensation at the ranch. Those on ponyback dismounted and the crowd gathered about the curious Cyclone.

Frank Reade, Jr., at the door took off his cap and saluted the crowd:

"Buenos señors!" he cried, in Spanish. "A fair day to you all."

The cowboys, most of whom were Mexicans, at once returned the salute politely. Their manifestations were friendly in the extreme.

"There is nothing to fear," he said, in an undertone to Snyder. "These our best friends. They will help us to run down Carlos Coleman."

At this moment a tall, broad-shouldered, swarthy-complexioned man came up to the Cyclone's side and saluted Frank, courteously.

"We have seen railroads, señor, but never before a locomotive which goes without smoke or without rails. You are from the East?"

"You have guessed rightly," replied Frank.

"I am Miguel Hernandez, ranchero, and owner of this range," continued the Mexican. "I cordially invite you to make yourself welcome at my ranch. Enter, and have a glass of wine with me."

"I thank you!"

Frank understood Mexican customs well enough to know that it would be regarded impolite to refuse this invitation. So he descended from the Cyclone's deck.

"May I ask Señor Americano your mission in this part of the country?" asked Hernandez, as they walked toward the ranch through the crowd of cowboys.

"Certainly," replied Frank. "I am on the track of Carlos Coleman, the outlaw."

Hernando gave a violent start, and Frank noted a queer change of expression in his face.

"Indeed, Señor Reade. I know the rascal well. I can give you aid, I have no doubt."

"You will confer a great favor, rest assured!" cried Frank, eagerly.

But at this moment they entered the ranch. And on that instant, why, he hardly knew, Frank experienced a sudden, swift and chilling misgiving. The sensation was so powerful that he was nigh impelled to turn back.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### THE RANCHERO'S CLEVER GAME.

THE feeling which passed over Frank Reade, Jr., so singularly was like an icy bath. It was with an effort that he dispelled it.

He followed the ranchero into a small room, in which was a table and chairs. With politeness the Mexican waved him to a seat.

"Make yourself easy, señor," he said, gracefully. "I will procure the wine."

He returned in a moment with a bottle and glasses. These he placed upon the table, then seating himself opposite Frank, he said:

"You surprise me, señor, when you tell me that you are after Coleman. Ah! he is the curse of this country. Many an honest man of ours has held up his hands to the villain and given up his last peso."

"Then you have had experience with the villain?"

"I should say we had. Our boys never go out upon the range without a little scrimmage with Coleman before they return. Ah! we would give much if we could drive him to the wall. He is a pest!"

Frank Reade, Jr., was deeply gratified at hearing this expression of the ranchero's mind. He felt sure of the co-operation of the cowboys, and he believed that they could aid him greatly.

At least they would be likely to know the whereabouts of the swamp in which it was reported that Coleman had his stronghold. All these thoughts and much more passed through Frank's mind as he sat opposite his host.

It must not be supposed that Miguel Hernandez was obtuse. He read the great inventor's mind like a printed book, and smiled beneath his drooping mustache in a peculiar way.

"Carlos Coleman shall be summarily dealt with!" cried Frank, forcibly. "That is what I am in this country for, Señor Hernandez. Of course, I can depend upon your co-operation?"

"Señor Reade," replied the ranchero, with a deep bow, "you have but to command and I serve."

"Good!" exclaimed Frank. "You have seen my invention, the Cyclone. It is a powerful engine of warfare, and with it I could conquer a small army. I have the power to crush Coleman in an instant's time if I can learn his whereabouts and swoop down upon him."

"Ay, Señor Reade," said the ranchero, quietly. "I have no doubt of all that."

"Now, can you tell me where I would be most apt to find him?"

"Well, he has several strongholds. About one hundred miles from here there is a large butte and a cavern—"

"I have been there," interrupted Frank.

"I drove him from that place."

The ranchero looked surprised.

"It was always considered an impregnable post," he declared.

"Yes, but it yielded to the Cyclone," declared Frank. "Why, I could batter down the walls of the City of Mexico with my electric gun."

The ranchero was thoughtful and quiet for a moment. Then he said:

"There was another stronghold. Across this range there are hills and a deep canyon. In that canyon is an island, high walled, and almost safe from the efforts of man to scale its heights."

"Exactly!" replied Frank. "I have been there, and Coleman has been driven from his aerial retreat. It is from there that I have just come."

"What!" exclaimed Hernandez, with apparent stupefaction. "You don't mean to say that you have driven Carlos from the canyon island?"

"Yes," replied Frank.

The ranchero pursed his lips and whistled shrilly.

"I don't see how you did it, señor," he declared, in a mystified way. "You must be more than an ordinary general. Why, that place was almost unassailable."

"Very true," agreed Frank.

"But that is not answering your question, Señor Reade. There is another stronghold which Coleman occupies sometimes. Not far from here is a mighty tract of swamp land. It is thickly overgrown with cypress, with clinging vines and dank grasses. It is thickly infested with wild animals and poisonous reptiles. In the very heart of that swamp Coleman has a retreat. There are two ways of getting to it, but they are known only to his gang."

Frank listened with deep interest.



Then he said, forcibly:

"Enough! I wish you to show me the way to that swamp."

The ranchero poured a glass of wine from the bottle. The fluid looked like liquid fire in the peculiar light of the room.

"Of course I will," Senor Hernando replied, glibly. "But I trust you will not consider me inquisitive if I ask you a question. What brought you out here on Coleman's track?"

"I am here to rescue a young girl whom he abducted from her home in Nebraska," replied Frank. "Her name is Madge Weston, and she is now in his power."

"Diablo!" exclaimed Hernando, with force. "The trick of a fiend. Enough! I am with you

Cyclone, I shall be pleased to in a measure reciprocate your hospitality."

"Not yet, Senor Reade," interposed the polite Mexican. "I must insist that you spend more time with me."

At that instant a strange sensation passed over the great inventor. His head swam, his eyes seemed likely to bulge from their sockets, and a cold perspiration broke out upon him.

For a moment it seemed to Frank as if he must sink to the floor. It was only with the most powerful effort that he controlled himself and recovered in part from the fearful sensation.

Senor Hernando affected solicitude.

"Diablo! Are you ill, Senor Reade?" he cried. "You are faint."

"Traitor! I see your game. Stand away from that door."

"I decline, senor," replied Hernando, with a mocking smile. "No—do not attempt violence. It will be of no use. You are my prisoner."

A hoarse, gurgling cry rattled in Frank's throat. He felt the effects of the drugged wine now, and his senses were leaving him fast. He grappled with Hernando, but it was a futile effort, for the next moment oblivion came over him, and he sank down in a heap upon the floor of the ranch.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

BARNEY OUTWITTED.

MEANWHILE, Frank Reade, Jr.'s companions on board the Cyclone had been patiently await-



He hastily shut the current from the netting, and then opened the door in the netting. The Cyclone had been brought to a stop. Frank hastily dragged each one of the unconscious outlaws to the door and dropped them unceremoniously out upon the hard prairie.

heart and soul, Senor Reade. Let us drink to our success."

Frank was instinctively averse to taking the wine. He was not over fond of the beverage but he knew well that it was the only way to avoid offending the ranchero.

Accordingly he drank the wine down quickly and placed the glass upon the table. But before Hernando could drink his he leaped up, exclaiming:

"Pardon me, senor. Some one calls me. I will return."

He set the glass down upon the table and made his exit. He returned almost instantly, however.

"It was nothing," he commented carelessly. "A lazy peon asking for a peso. They are inveterate beggars. Very well, Senor Reade, the compact is made. We will help you exterminate Coleman and his gang."

"I am glad of your co-operation," replied Frank. "Now, if you will come aboard the

"Just a slight faintness, that is all," said Frank, rising to his feet.

"Ah! Have some wine? That will dispel the faintness."

"No," replied Frank, firmly. "I believe that is what made me ill."

"Impossible, senor. It is the purest of our Mexican wine. Oh, no, do not think that, Senor Reade."

"I—I think I will return to the Cyclone," said Frank, staggering toward the door.

With a bound Hernando reached it and placed his back against it.

"No, you must not go yet."

All in one swift instant the truth flashed across the mind of Frank Reade, Jr. He saw his position at a glance. He was in a trap. There had been something the matter with the wine, and the urbane Senor Hernando was a treacherous foe.

Realizing this in one brief second, Frank knew that his only hope was to get back to the Cyclone. Therefore he cried:

ing his return. As time went, and he did not appear, Barney, first of all, began to feel somewhat worried.

Fortunately, the astute Irishman had insisted on keeping the steel door leading to the Cyclone's deck closed, so that none of the crowd of cowboys outside could come aboard.

Nobody felt like leaving the Cyclone, so that the treacherous foe had no chance to spring a surprise upon Frank's fellow voyagers.

If it had not been for these wise precautions, there was no doubt but that the Cyclone and all on board would have fallen into the hands of Hernando.

But Barney was by far too shrewd for this. He had traveled the world over with Frank Reade, Jr., and he was wise enough to regard all strange people in a strange land as foes, until there was unimpeachable evidence that they were friends.

The cowboys, rough fellows, all thronged about the Cyclone and made some cheap talk with Pomp, who several times, with his African



wit, shut them up effectually. Barney totally ignored any approach at an acquaintance with any of them.

Dr. Vaneyke and Snyder, the detective, were seated near the pilot-house. Enid was in a hammock at the lower end of the deck.

As time went by, Barney began to speculate and as usual, out loud.

"Begorra! it's mighty funny what's kaping Mither Frank. Be me troth, it's not like him to sthay away so long."

Dr. Vaneyke overhead this remark, and said:

"Barney, I share your wonderment. It is curious what is keeping Frank."

"It's mighty quare, sir."

"Do you suppose—anything has happened?"

"He is very busy and desires that you come at once."

This settled all doubt in Barney's astute mind. He was finally convinced that treachery was afloat.

He was quick to hit upon an expedient. In an instant he had thrown open the steel door and covered the ranchero with his rifle.

"Hands up, yez yaller Mexican," he cried, forcibly. "Av yez don't I'll blow daylight troo yez. O'iam onto your little tricks, ye limb of the devil, an' if yer don't projoice Mither Frank Reade, Jr. safe and aloive, O'll have the heart av yez. Whurroo!"

Hernando was dumfounded by this sudden turn in affairs. He gazed into the muzzle of

the Irishman see that he had put his foot in it, so to speak.

Of course the ranchero did not re-appear with Frank.

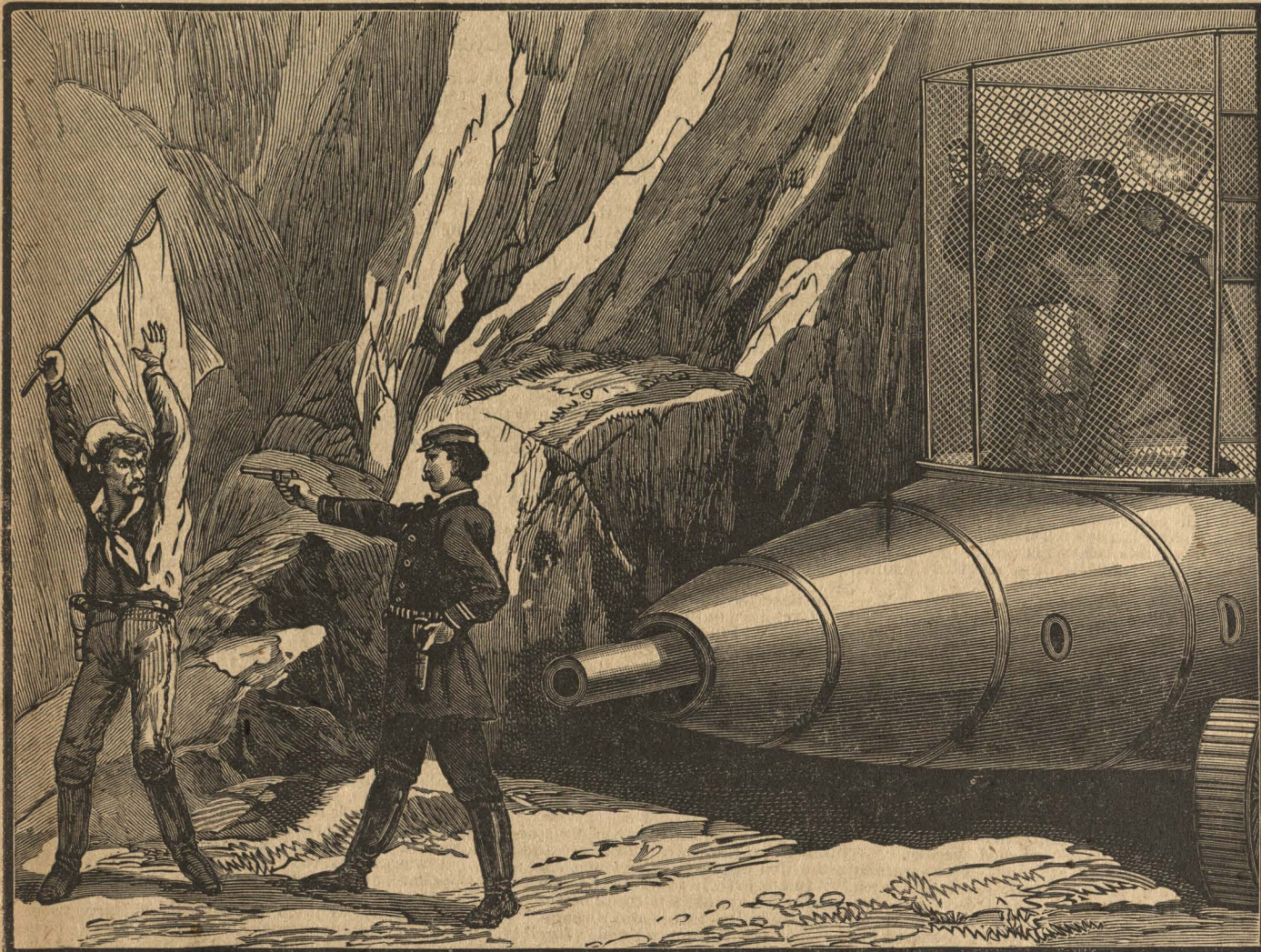
Snyder now exclaimed:

"What did you let him off for, Barney?"

"Be Mither Murphy's pigs!" exclaimed the Celt, scratching his head, "why didn't I iver think av its bein' as aisy for ther spalpeen to sthay in there as to come out wid Mither Frank. O'im sold this toime, an' Barney O'Shea's a big fool."

Everybody laughed at this comical version of Barney's error. But the situation was a critical one. It demanded immediate action.

"I jes' reckon some one mus' jus' go in dat ar ranch and see what am de mattah wif Marse



Quick as a flash he whipped out a revolver and covered the guide. "Hands up!" he cried, sternly. The outlaw turned white as a sheet. He complied at once. "Don't shoot!" he cried, imploringly. "Spare my life!"

No one spoke, but all exchanged glances. Barney shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"On me loife, I've a moind to go in there an' see for meself. I don't loike the looks ov it at all."

"Nor I, Barney," chimed in Snyder.

It was likely that action of some sort would have been made at once, but for an incident. Hernando himself appeared at the door of the ranch, and beckoning to Barney, cried:

"Senor Reade desires all of you gentlemen to come in here. Come at once."

This was an astonishing summons. Barney was shrewd enough to doubt it. For a moment he was silent and then his native Irish wit came to his aid.

"Did Mither Frank say that?" he asked, coolly.

"He did," replied Hernando.

"Well, plaze to tell him that I want to see him fer one moment. If yez plaze!"

A strange cloud passed over the ranchero's face. He hesitated and then rejoined impatiently:

the Winchester which covered him, and concluded not to move.

But his cunning, villainous nature was not at a loss for an expedient. He feigned terror and amazement.

"Caramba! You are mad, senor!" he cried.

"Put down your gun. I am your friend."

"It's a foine, loikely frind yez are," retorted Barney, contemptuously. "Now, I'll thank yez to walk down from that plazzy and walk up here to me. I want to talk a bit wid yez, me gossoon."

"But I haven't time," objected Hernando.

"Put up your gun, man, before I call Mr. Reade out to compel you to do it."

"Now, that's jist all I ask of yez," cried Barney. "If yez will call Mither Frank out, I'll let up on yez and ask yure pardon."

"All right," said Hernando, starting for the door. "I'll call him out."

Irishman-like, it did not drift through Barney's thick head that this was a clear trick of the ranchero's. Not until Hernando had really passed into the ranch and was out of range did

Frank!" cried Pomp. "Yo' jes' open dat do', I'ish, an' I'll go m'self."

"Don't be a fool, naygur!" said Barney, sharply. "Bejabers, they'd hang you up for a sthove poipe, if yez went in thar. There's only this about it—Mither Frank has got to be projoiced."

Barney shut and barred the steel door. The cowboys who had thronged the yard a moment before had scattered and disappeared.

"What ought to be done?" cried Dr. Vaneyke in great agitation. "Can no one suggest a plan of some sort?"

"Fire upon the ranch with the electric gun," cried Snyder. "Batter it down."

"Don't yo' do nuffin' ob de kind," interposed Pomp, excitedly. "Does yo' want to kill Marse Frank too? He am in dat ar ranch don' yo' fink?"

"Bejabers, I'd loike to give the place one salute," declared Barney, eagerly. "I don't belave that Mither Frank are in that place at all, at all."

"Nor I either," agreed Snyder. "Give 'em



one volley anyway, Barney. Take that wing of the ranch."

"Begorra, I'll do it."

Barney sprang down to the engine room. Before training the gun upon the ranch the Cyclone would have to be brought about. But now a great surprise was in store.

Barney started the electric engine. There was a fluttering of the indicator and a shower of sparks from the dynamos. The Cyclone did not move a peg.

Barney was astounded. It was the first time that the machinery had refused to act. What could be out of order?

It seemed like the working of fate that the machinery should be out of order at this important time. The faithful Barney was nigh distracted.

"Phwat the devil is the matter?" he muttered. "It was all right a while ago."

But the failure of the Cyclone to start had been noticed by those on deck. It was Dr. Vaneyke's first thought that something might be wrong with the wheels.

He had instantly went to a loophole, and, by craning his neck, he could see the rear running gear. There, plainly visible, was the cause of the mischief.

At an unobserved time, the cowboys had suffered several of their number to creep under the Cyclone and clog the wheels and driving-shaft with tough rawhide lariats. These were wound inextricably about, making with their combined strength a force which the most powerful engines in the world could never have overcome.

No sooner had Dr. Vaneyke made that discovery than a loud shout came from the ranch.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### A FEARFUL FATE.

THE shout from the ranch was in Hernando's voice and was accompanied by a mocking laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why don't you train your gun on the ranch? A very good reason, eh? Oh! I tell you Hernando is a hard man to beat, and I will tell you right here that the man who dares to show himself outside of the cigar case of yours will be a corpse instant. A dozen of my men will hold the drop on the Cyclone. So beware!"

"Coward!" cried Snyder, defiantly. "You dare not meet us in honorable fight in the open."

"Save your breath!" retorted the invisible Hernando. "You will need it. Let me tell you how well I fooled you. Carlos Coleman is my partner and best friend."

"I thought as much," cried Snyder.

"Oh! I duped you well. We are not real cowboys, nor do we herd cattle on this range. We are always on the lookout for the poor fools from the east who dare to come out here with money. Occasionally we hold up a stage or even a railroad train. So you can see what good friends you have fallen in with."

"The end is not yet," returned Snyder.

"No, but it is close at hand. I was warned of the coming of this Frank Reade, Jr., with his wonderful Cyclone several days ago. So you see I have been on the lookout for you ever since. It was a neat little trap I prepared for you."

"Begorra, so it was," muttered Barney.

"Now I have the famous Frank Reade, Jr., in my power. I propose to make a fine spectacle for you. Just out on the prairie there, out of range of your Winchesters, we are going to play mad steer with your valiant chief. Do you know how we do that? Well, we cut him loose and let him run over the prairie. Then we go after him and lasso and drag him to death behind our horses' heels. You shall see the whole fun! Ha, ha, ha! Be patient."

"Fiend!" shrieked Dr. Vaneyke. "You shall never do such a thing as that. If it takes my life Frank Reade, Jr., shall be saved."

The scientist made a rush for the steel door. But the others held him back.

"Calm yourself, doctor," admonished Snyder. "You will gain nothing by such a move. You would only be shot down as soon as you stepped outside."

"Yes," protested the doctor. "But we must not give Frank up. He must be saved."

"We cannot save him if we throw our lives away needlessly."

"You are right," agreed the scientist, suddenly regaining command of himself. "I am carried away with a mad impulse. Let us

think clearly and calmly and act with great dispatch."

"There is only one way to save Frank," declared the detective.

"How?"

"We must, first of all, plan some way to liberate the running gear of the Cyclone."

Dr. Vaneyke was thoughtful a moment. He was about to speak when a loud cry from Barney caused the attention of all to be directed toward a thrilling scene.

Some distance out on the prairie a gang of the cowboys could be seen galloping about on their fleet bronchos. Foremost among them was the tall form of the ranchero, Hernando.

Between two of the cowboys rode a man who was bound to his horse with his hands tied behind him. A deep groan escaped simultaneously the lips of all.

"That is Frank!" cried Dr. Vaneyke, "and they are taking him out to his death."

"Is there no way to save him?" said Snyder, hopelessly.

Then all were held riveted to the spot with horror. The mustang, upon which was the prisoner, was seen to cut loose from the others. The prisoner seemed limp and in a half faint, so unsteadily did he sit in the saddle.

The next moment a half score of lassos were seen circling through the air. In nearly every case the nooses seemed to settle down over the neck and shoulders of the prisoner.

Then a loud whoop went up from the murderous gang, and they wheeled their horses and galloped away madly across the plain.

The lariats became taut instantly. The prisoner was literally torn from the mustang's back and dragged over the rough prairie. On and on, until the horizon shut them from view, went the cowboys, dragging their victim after them.

And the witnesses of this fearful thing, those on board the Cyclone, stood petrified with horror and utter helplessness. Not until the horizon shut the scene from view did the dispelling of that horrid fascination, which held them spellbound, come to their relief.

Then Dr. Vaneyke, half fainting, reeled back with ghastly, white face and cried in a voice of fearful sorrow:

"Oh, I cannot bear to think that Frank has gone from this life. Such a noble brain to be still thus early in life. Oh, what shall we do?"

To describe the scene adequately on board the Cyclone would be impossible. The grief of Barney and Pomp was uncontrollable. Little Enid was also distraught.

"What fools we were to stand here and inactive see him murdered!" cried Snyder, in self-reproach.

"Oh, ain't I done gwine to see Marse Frank no more," cried Pomp in an outburst of grief. "Oh, dis ducky would jes' rudder hab died hisself den dot dey should hab killed Marse Frank."

"Och, Mither av Mercy," cried Barney, in wild abandon. "I can niver be meself agin. Och, that iver I should see this day."

Dr. Vaneyke had been the first one to calm himself and he now came forward and in a manner which impressed every one, said:

"But it is folly to waste time here in useless grief. We should not think of the past now, but look to the future and revenge."

"Ay!" cried Duncan Snyder, forcibly. "Let us liberate the Cyclone, and if we have to pursue Miguel Hernando to the end of the earth, we will wreak vengeance upon his head."

Barney and Pomp greeted this declaration with a cheer. At once, with deadly determination to avenge Frank Reade, Jr., they went to work.

Barney conceived a daring plan of crawling down among the cog wheels and driving bars of the Cyclone through a trap-door in the dynamo room. He was here screened from the aim of those in the ranch, and he was able to work upon the tightly wound lariats.

With a sharp knife Barney speedily made shoe strings of them. In a short while he had freed the running gear of its impediment.

Then, returning to the dynamo room, the machinery was started. The Cyclone instantly moved forward and was allowed to speed out upon the prairie.

No attention was paid to the ranch or whatever inmates it might have. The one thought was of running down Hernando and his murderous gang. The Cyclone was let out to full speed, and fairly flew over the level plain.

On and on thundered the electric avenger. Still no sign of the cowboys was to be seen in the distance.

The trail through the grass was plainly vis-

ible, a deep furrow being made where they had dragged their victim to such a frightful death.

Now a range of hills suddenly began to rise to view. A long series of plateaus seemed to appear to the westward.

Pomp was at the wheel, while Dr. Vaneyke was keeping a sharp lookout ahead, when suddenly a warning cry from him caused Pomp to shut off the current and stop the Cyclone.

Just ahead a dark heap, to which was attached a number of lariats, was visible in the prairie grass. It was the victim of the vengeance of Hernando.

With a fearful sense of horror, all clambered down from the Cyclone's deck, and approached that dreadful object in the grass. A fearful shock was in store for them.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

#### THE FIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE.

DR. VANEYKE was the first to bend down over the dark object in the grass. There were the outlines of a human form, but the moment his hand touched the garments so torn and soiled the doctor gave a thrilling cry:

"Duped!" he cried. "This is all a sharp dodge to throw us off the track. They did not drag Frank Reade, Jr., at their horses' heels. It was a harmless dummy. See?"

This was plainly the truth. The supposed victim of Miguel Hernando's vengefulness was but a cleverly rigged dummy. A suit of clothing had been stuffed with hay, and at a distance had served well the purposes of deception.

The little party of would-be rescuers stood speechless gazing at the dummy with mingled feelings of chagrin and mystification.

"A dummy!" exclaimed Duncan Snyder, drawing a deep breath. "In one sense I am mightily relieved to know that it was not Frank Reade, Jr., whom they dragged at their horses' heels."

"Fo' goodness sakes!" was all Pomp said, as he stared at the dummy.

"Begorra, that's a foine sell on us!" exploded Barney. "But it's meself as is mighty glad that it was not Mither Frank after all."

"That is just the way I feel," cried Dr. Vaneyke. "But what is the game of the villains? Why have they played this trick upon us? It is all for some purpose, be sure."

"You're right," agreed Snyder. "And they have fooled us well. It was all a clever dodge to divert us from the ranch. Very likely Frank may be there yet. Let us go back at once."

"That's right!" cried Barney, excitedly. "We kin blow smithereens out av the ould barracks."

"It is hardly likely that we will find Frank there," said the doctor, with careful thought. "They have diverted us from the right pursuit. Without doubt they have spirited Frank away from the ranch many, many miles."

"If they have spared his life," rejoined Snyder.

"Which I believe to be true," declared Dr. Vaneyke, positively. "There is no doubt but that Frank Reade, Jr., is still alive. We must and will rescue him."

A cheer burst from the lips of the others. It was decided to return to the ranch and investigate, and in a few moments all were quickly on board the Cyclone.

Pomp went to the wheel and Barney soon had the dynamos humming. The Cyclone made rapid time over the hard floor of the prairie.

It was not long before the ranch came again in view on the horizon. The distance was rapidly lessened, and soon the Cyclone was brought to a stop in the yard of the ranch.

But every one was instantly impressed with the deserted appearance of the ranch. Everything was still as the grave. The cowboys had doubtless abandoned the place.

Dr. Vaneyke and Barney, however, armed with Winchesters, left the Cyclone and approached the structure. The Cyclone's electric gun was bearing directly on the ranch ready for use in case of an emergency.

But there was no call for its use. The doctor and Barney met with no opposition and in a very few moments had thoroughly explored the whole place. There was no manner of doubt but that the cowboys with Frank Reade, Jr., in their power had skipped the place.

The question now to be considered was their whereabouts. An idea occurred to Barney, and he expressed it.

"Faith an' it's my belafe that the omadhouns have gone to the westward with Mither Frank to jine Carlos Coleman and his gang. I'll bate me loife an that."

"Certainly that is a reasonable theory,"



agreed Dr. Vaneyke. "Why not start in quest of Coleman's stronghold, which, it is said, is in the depths of the Black Swamp, so called? I feel sure we will find Frank there."

Conference with the others resulted in the decision to go on to the Black Swamp.

Accordingly the Cyclone's course was set to the westward.

In a short while the ranch and its outbuildings had vanished from view. But thrilling events were close at hand.

Dr. Vaneyke and Duncan Snyder, who were very anxious, were forward of the pilot-house on the lookout. Suddenly the doctor gave a violent start, and cried:

"Look! what is that?"

Snyder strained his vision at a distant object on the horizon. At first it was a long, dark, moving line.

Then another line of the same description could be seen just beyond. In a few moments the two lines seemed to merge one into the other.

Then a puff of white smoke was seen to ascend into the air. In fact, quite a volume of this peculiar smoke was visible.

Pomp in the pilot house handed the doctor a glass. Scrutinizing the distant scene with this the scientist cried:

"It is two bodies of horsemen, and they seem to be fighting."

"Who can they be?" cried Snyder, excitedly.

"Possibly the cowboys and the outlaws, eh?"

"No," replied Dr. Vaneyke, with a sudden conviction. "It looks to me as if one of the forces are Indians. I think I can see their lances and plumes. It is the largest party, as near as I can make out."

"Ha!" cried Snyder, excitedly, "without doubt the cowboys have encountered a gang of Apaches. Crowd on the current, Barney. Let us get there as quick as possible."

"Ay, sir, that I will!" cried Barney, with alacrity, as he sprang down to the engine-room again. "I hope we'll give the spalpeens a bit of a lesson this toime, and resky Mister Frank."

"Do you think Frank is with them?" asked Snyder, excitedly.

"I cannot tell at this distance," replied Dr. Vaneyke, continuing to study the distant scene with his glass. "I hope, however, that he is."

"So do I. We will be sure to rescue him if he is."

The Cyclone literally flew over the ground. In a very short space of time the two contending parties became quite distinguishable.

It was then very readily seen that a cavalcade of the cowboys had encountered a roving band of savages. A battle was the certain result.

The crack of firearms was plainly heard, and the contest was a savage one, for men and horses could be seen mixed up inextricably.

Loud yells and shouts and curses alternated with the volleys of firearms. The ground was strewn with dead and wounded horses, cowboys and Indians.

As the Cyclone drew nearer the contending forces, Dr. Vaneyke looked sharply for Frank Reade, Jr. But among the cowboys he could not distinguish him.

A faint horror came over the scientist, as he reflected that the great inventor might possibly be among the slain. Yet he clung to hope.

The battle raged fiercely. The combatants did not seem to heed the approach of the Cyclone. At this juncture the cowboys seemed to have the best of it.

Their deadly revolvers, so effective at short range, worked havoc among the savages. Yet the latter far outnumbered the former.

In vain Dr. Vaneyke looked for Frank Reade, Jr. He was not to be seen.

Hastily it was decided what was best to be done.

Barney and Pomp were in favor of discharging the electric gun into their midst, but Dr. Vaneyke concluded that this would be unnecessary slaughter.

"Put on a slow current!" he cried to Barney. "Pomp, you may run the Cyclone as nearly as possible between the two parties."

Pomp needed no second bidding. Suddenly, and with a resistless force, the Cyclone swept down into the midst of the battle, separating the two forces like a dividing knife.

The effect was thrilling in the extreme.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### BROUGHT TO BAY.

INDIANS and cowboys were hurled right and left, and fell back before the advance of the

Cyclone. It was not in their power to resist the monster which literally hewed its way through their ranks.

For a moment the tide of battle surged backward. Then the savages recovering from their surprise, and recognizing a new foe, descended upon the Cyclone in a fierce onslaught.

But Barney connected the current with the steel sides of the Cyclone, and charged the hull with the electric fluid.

The result was, that every Apache who came in contact with the Cyclone was hurled back with crushing force. Savages and ponies were piled up in a heap.

But the cowboys seizing the opportunity, broke away in wild flight across the plain.

Dr. Vaneyke during the melee had not been idle.

He had vainly endeavored to identify Frank Reade, Jr., among the wounded and slain upon the prairie. While thus engaged he did not notice the action of the cowboys, until his attention was attracted by Pomp.

"Hi, Dr. Vaneyke!" shouted the dorky, "does yo' see dem yer cowboys jes' givin' us de shake? I done tink dey should be stopped fo' dey gits away."

"Right!" cried the scientist, excitedly. "Never mind the savages. They can do us no harm. Pursue the cowboys, Pomp!"

The faithful dorky needed no second bidding. He had quickly set the Cyclone's course in pursuit of the cowboys, and once more the electric wonder was thundering across the prairie.

"They have got quite a start on us," declared Snyder. "Their horses are certainly very fleet."

"But we will overtake them," averred the doctor, confidently.

This was beyond question, yet, at that moment, an idea came into the doctor's mind. He conceived the plan of calling the foe to a halt by a summons, just as a ship is compelled to heave to at sea.

He sprang down into the cabin, and went forward to the electric gun. It was a favorable opportunity, and, sighting the gun, the doctor sent an electric bolt over the heads of the fleeing gang.

It struck the prairie two hundred yards ahead of them and the result was terrific. The air was filled with darting forks of lightning, earth and stones. Every horse bolted and came to a terrified halt.

In their rear the Cyclone was thundering, and before they could break away in a fresh direction, a stern voice smote upon their hearing.

Hold! do not go a step further or you will all be hurled into eternity. Stand where you are!

But the wild terror which had possession of the cowboys influenced them to disregard this warning. They broke away in a new direction.

The fleet ponies were making rapid progress over the prairie. But Dr. Vaneyke once more sighted the electric gun.

Another bolt in front of them, this time much nearer, had the effect of bringing them to their senses. The darting lightning flashes and the terrific upheaval of a mound of earth was testimony that those on board the Cyclone really possessed the power they claimed to hurl them into eternity.

Words cannot describe the fright of the cowboys. In a moment they had dismounted from their ponies and had drawn them up in a circle, standing behind them and sighting their Winchester at the Cyclone over the saddle bow.

Pomp brought the Cyclone to a halt not fifty yards away. Then Dr. Vaneyke appeared on the deck and hailed the cowboys.

"Ahoj there!" he shouted. "Who is your leader?"

"I am," replied a tall, swarthy fellow, stepping out from behind his pony. "What do you want?"

"We want you to deliver up to us, safe and well, Frank Reade, Jr."

"Do you mean the chap who went into the ranch to talk with Hernando?"

"Yes."

"Well, he ain't with us."

"Where is he?"

"You'll have to ask Hernando that."

Dr. Vaneyke experienced a sharp thrill of dismay. Yet he believed that the cowboy was falsifying.

"Tell me the truth," he said, sternly. "Where is Frank Reade, Jr.?"

"I told you that I did not know."

"I do not believe you. If you do not tell me

the truth, I will blow you all to perdition with the electric gun."

The fellow trembled, and a murmur came from the other cowboys. It was plain that they greatly dreaded the terrible destroyer.

"Well, I will tell you all I know about it, senor," he replied, abjectly.

"That is all right," rejoined the doctor. "Out with it, then."

"We left the ranch some hours ago. When we left the Senor Americano was there, with Hernando and six others. We had orders to corral some cattle on the range. That is all we know about it."

The doctor was convinced that the fellow spoke the truth. He was not a little disappointed, but believed now that he saw through the scheme perfectly well.

Hernando had done this thing to mislead pursuit.

He knew that those on board the Cyclone would return to the ranch. They would then undoubtedly look for the trail, and he had sent the majority of his men in this direction purposely to mislead the dread pursuers.

While he, with a chosen few and his prisoner had gone in another direction. Probably before this they were in the depths of the Miaco, or Black Swamp.

All this flashed across the doctor's mind and decided him upon a plan of action.

"Look here, fellow," he said, sternly, "I want you to understand that your life depends upon your telling me the truth. If you lie to me you shall die!"

"Ay, senor," replied the cowboy, in an earnest manner. "I will swear by my patron saint that I have spoken the truth."

"Now have you any idea as to where Hernando has gone with his prisoner?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Where, may I ask?"

"To the Miaco Swamp."

"Then he is really in league with Carlos Coleman?"

"I may say so, senor."

"Enough. What is the way to that swamp and how far is it?"

The cowboy looked to the north-west and made reply:

"From here you should keep to the north-west, senor. In distance it is a matter of forty miles or more; but you cannot enter the swamp with your wonderful carriage."

"Ah!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke. "Then it is a bad place to penetrate?"

"You are right, senor. No one has ever yet found the stronghold of Black Carlos in that swamp."

Dr. Vaneyke turned and consulted with Snyder a moment. Then he again addressed the cowboy spokesman.

"I have a request to make and can listen to no refusal."

"What may it be, senor?"

"That you in a body accompany us to the swamp. One of your number shall come aboard and direct us how to go. When we have reached the swamp, then you will be allowed to go free."

"We will do that, senor," replied the cowboy, readily. "I will come aboard and—"

He did not finish the sentence. At that moment the floor of the prairie shook with the thunder of hoofs, and turning his head Dr. Vaneyke saw that the savages were returning to the attack with great fury.

The next moment they descended upon the Cyclone like a thunderbolt.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### FACING A FEARFUL FATE.

FRANK READE, JR., had just time to realize the appalling truth that the wine which he had drunk was drugged, and that he was in a trap when unconsciousness ensued.

A wild, mocking laugh rang from the cunning Hernando's lips, and he suffered Frank's insensible body to fall to the floor.

"Per Dios! what a success!" he cried, excitedly. "Leon! Pedrol! fetch out the horses! We must leave here post haste."

It was then that by Hernando's direction the wheels of the Cyclone were clogged, and the scheme to divert Frank's friends was enacted.

The drug which Frank had taken was not one of long duration, and he was already beginning to revive.

But his hands and feet were securely bound, so that if he had had inclination he could not have attempted escape.

By this time the Cyclone was thundering far away over the plain in pursuit of the dummy.



When Frank came to he saw Hernando giving orders to a half score of men. He was lying upon the floor of the ranch, bound hand and foot.

In a few moments all but six of the cowboys left the room, and then the clatter of their horses' hoofs were heard as they rode away. Hernando turned and saw that Frank had recovered his senses.

"Ha! my fine inventor," he cried, jubilantly, "you see that you have run your head into a fine trap. You are a man of brains, but not shrewd enough for Hernando. Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank's head yet swam with the effects of the drug, but he managed to reply:

"I do not exert my brains in the practice of trickery or miserable treachery. I may be your prisoner, but I do not fear you. I defy you!"

Hernando's face flushed.

"Take care!" he gritted. "You are at my mercy."

"Bah! You are a cowardly dog."

Hernando drew a keen knife, and stood trembling with rage over the young inventor. But Frank only returned his gaze steadily and contemptuously.

"I can kill you!" gritted the ranchero. "You had better beware!"

"You will find that I do not fear death," Frank replied, calmly. "You can no more than kill me. The mere fact that you meditate striking a defenseless man is evidence of your cowardice."

"No. You are safe!" exclaimed the villain, with a strange, vengeful light in his eyes. "I will not kill you. I have a sweeter fate in store for you."

"Why do you seek my life?" asked Frank Reade, Jr. "I have never done you any harm."

"You are my natural enemy," declared Hernando, plainly. "I am ostensibly a ranchero, but my men, masked, and under cover of darkness, can hold up any stage in this country. Carlos Coleman and I are good friends, in fact, partners. You seek the life of Carlos—"

"Wait!" interrupted Frank, quickly. "You are wrong there. I do not seek the life of Carlos Coleman. I only seek to rescue a young girl whom he has abducted and holds in his power."

"It is all the same!" declared Hernando, mockingly. "We are enemies and that is enough."

"Very well, we are enemies!" said Frank, coolly. "Remember, that I deal summarily with enemies of your stamp."

"Your bravado is ill-timed. At present your vengeance amounts to little."

"Perhaps so, but you say you are not going to kill me. What fate have you in store for me?"

"A very tender one I assure you," replied the ranchero, with a contemptuous laugh. "You shall see very quickly."

With this the colloquy broke off. Hernando gave several sharp peremptory orders. In a few moments the tramp of horses' hoofs was heard in the ranch-yard without.

Then two of the six cowboys seized Frank and bore him out of the ranch. In a few moments he was bound tightly to the back of a mustang.

Then, a prisoner in the center of the party, he was carried away in this fashion across the plain.

For hours the little cavalcade rode on swiftly. The ranch buildings died out of sight in the distance, and after a time a long, irregular timber belt was seen upon the horizon.

Hernando saw Frank Reade, Jr., looked inquiringly at this and hastened to say:

"That, senor, is the Miaco Swamp. After passing through that timber line one at once enters the swamp."

"I thank you!" replied Frank, coolly.

Still on they rode rapidly. The day was rapidly drawing to a close, and it would not be long before darkness would enshroud the country.

When near the belt of timber Hernando suddenly drew rein. He leaped from his horseback and cried:

"Here is just the place."

He hobbled his mustang, and then with his hunting knife marked a circle in the sandy soil.

"Take the prisoner from his horse," was his command. "Dig the pit here. How do you fancy being buried in this place, Senor Reade?"

Frank experienced a chill, but his face showed no trepidation.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "So you are going to kill me after all?"

"Ah, no, senor, it is a fate far worse than that. I mean to bury you alive in this spot."

In spite of his cool courage and nerves of steel, Frank Reade, Jr., turned pale. It was a frightful fate to contemplate.

"So that is your plan?" he said, with an effort. "Ah, well, it only proves my assertion that you are a coward. A brave man will kill his foe, but never torture him to death."

"It is death just the same!" cried Hernando, with a jeering laugh. "A little different mode, that is all."

By this time the cowboys had dug a deep hole in the ground. Into this Frank Reade, Jr., was placed standing. His chin was just on a level with the ground.

Then the dirt was filled in about him, and in a brief space of time he was literally buried alive. He was powerless to move a muscle in his body, except those of his face.

The villain Hernando stood over him with demoniac glee.

"Now, my fine inventor," he cried, jeeringly, "you can meet death with that bravery which you claimed a short while ago. Let me tell you of the nice fate in store for you. Do not think that you will starve to death. Oh, no! see, darkness is fast coming on. When it has settled down in good shape, these woods will turn out hundreds of wolves. They will find you. I need say no more. Now, perhaps, you can afford to jeer at Hernando's vengeance. Ha, ha, ha! You had better beg for mercy."

Frank Reade, Jr., experienced a fearful sense of horror. He knew that if left in his present position, his fate would be sealed. The thought of the wolves was a sickening one indeed.

But he only replied calmly:

"You are wasting your breath, sir. I am not afraid of death. I will show you how a man can die."

Hernando made the air ring with his devilish laugh. Then he sprang to his horse's back, first having removed the hobble. He waved his hand in adieu and a few moments later the party were out of sight beyond a bend in the timber line.

Frank Reade, Jr., was left alone. He could now realize the full enormities of his terrible position. Certain death stared him in the face. In vain he struggled to free his arms.

And now the grim, grizzly shadows of night settled down about him. Already he could hear the howl of the wolves in the timber, now he could hear the pattering of their feet and see their gaunt forms in the depths of the darkness about. Oh, God! what an awful fate it was to face.

The continuation and conclusion of this story can be found in the FRANK READE LIBRARY No. 65 entitled, "FRANK READE, JR.'S ELECTRIC CYCLONE; or, THRILLING ADVENTURES IN NO MAN'S LAND," by "Noname," Part II.

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